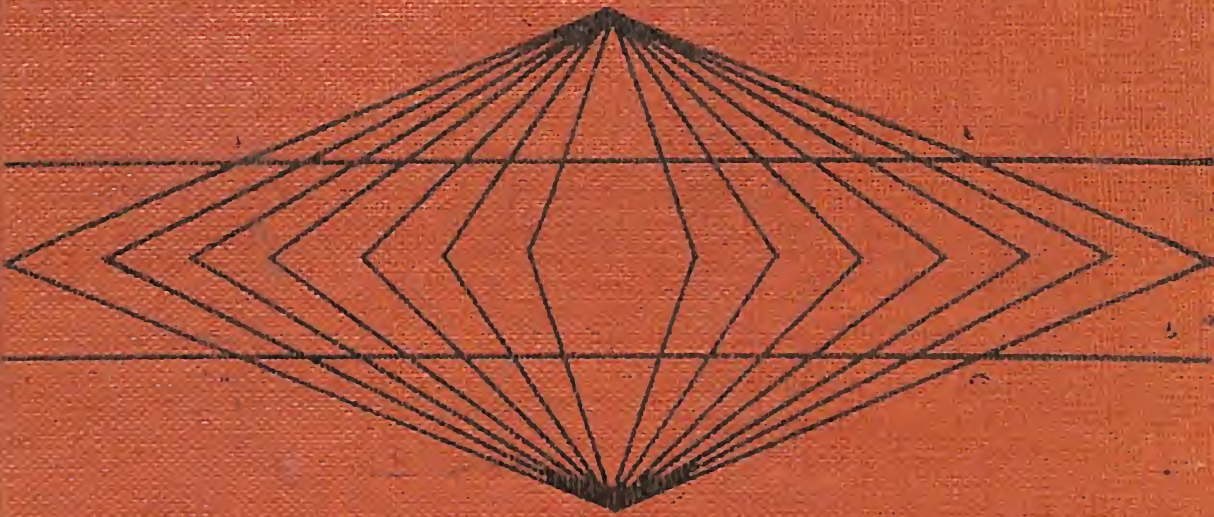


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# ADVAITA VEDĀNTA



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R. BALASUBRAMANIAN



*Madras University Philosophical Series—No. 23*

GENERAL EDITOR :

Dr V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

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ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

*The Personalistic Existentialism of Berdyaev*  
*The Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārtika of Sureśvara*



20-5

# ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

BY

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## GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Since its inception in September 1927, the Department of Philosophy was bringing out publications relating to different schools of Indian Philosophy, under the title *Madras University Philosophical Series*. The Department was upgraded into a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy in August 1964. Subsequent publications have covered a wider range to include Existentialism, Analytical Philosophy, and Social Philosophy, not to mention the proceedings of the All India Seminars and of one International Seminar on World Philosophy conducted by the Centre.

The present work, *Advaita Vedānta* based on Maṇḍana's *Brahmasiddhi* by Dr R. Balasubramanian, the twenty third in the Madras University Philosophical Series, is a valuable contribution to Advaita literature in English. Two other works of Dr Balasubramanian, which have already appeared in this series, are *The Personalistic Existentialism of Berdyaev* and *The Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārtika of Suresvara*. The Centre looks forward to publication of more works from the pen of Dr R. Balasubramanian and the other members on its academic staff.

V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

Director

Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy  
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## FOREWORD

In this monograph, Dr R. Balasubramanian presents a lucid account of Advaita as expounded by Maṇḍana Miśra in his *Brahmasiddhi*. An elder contemporary of Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana has made a significant contribution to the development of Advaita as the Great Tradition in Indian Philosophy. It is a noteworthy feature of all philosophical schools in India that there is absence of doctrinal regimentation and comparative freedom from dogma. That this is especially true of Advaita is evident from the fact that the Advaita-Ācāryas have resorted to several modes of conveying the truth of Non-duality in their works. It is well-known that after Ādi Śaṅkara there came into vogue two main schools in Advaita, viz the *Vivaraṇa* and the *Bhāmatī*. While there are minor differences between them, they agree on the fundamental principles. The differences are over such questions as : Is the *jīva* (soul) a reflection (*pratibimba*) of *Brahman*, or the result of a limitation (*avaccheda*)? Is the mind (*manas*) to be regarded as a sense-organ, or not? Is the final instrument of liberation the hearing (*śravaṇa*) of the major text (*mahā-vākya*), or continued meditation (*prasāṅkhyāna*)? Vācaspati who is the founder of the *Bhāmatī* school is profoundly influenced by the Maṇḍana tradition in Advaita.

In the present book, the philosophy of Maṇḍana Miśra is sought to be expounded in a systematic manner. After a brief introduction, the problems connected with the *pramāṇa*-s are discussed, as also the question of truth

and error. The theories of error known as *khyāti-vāda-s* are foundational to the philosophies. Each view is elaborately set forth and minutely criticised from the standpoint of Advaita. It is *avidyā* that conceals the true and projects the untrue. *Avidyā* is responsible for the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the non-real on the real. The illusory is neither real nor unreal ; it is indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). The objections usually raised against this view are met in the way Maṇḍana does. After epistemology follow the metaphysical doctrines : the nature of Reality, *i.e.* *Brahman-Ātman*, the truth of non-duality, the unintelligibility of the concept of difference, etc. The various aspects concerning *avidyā* are considered in a separate chapter. And, in the remaining chapter, the practical discipline, the place of *karma* in the scheme, the reason why *jñāna* is the direct means are all clearly explained. The nature of *mokṣa* which is the final goal, and the concept of *jīvan-mukti* are considered in detail, rounding off a well-presented manual of Advaita.

I am sure this book will be found useful by all those who seek to get introduced to a profoundly significant phase in the development of the Advaita tradition.

Madras  
August 4, 1976 }

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN  
Senior Professor of Philosophy  
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## PREFACE

The aim of this monograph is to set forth the philosophy of Advaita with special reference to Maṇḍana-miśra's *Brahmasiddhi*, the earliest among the works of the *siddhi*-literature of Advaita. Maṇḍana who is respected as a great authority has contributed a great deal to the tradition of Advaita. His views are quoted by post-Śaṅkara Advaitins like Vācaspati, Amalānanda, Prakāśātman, Ānandabodha, Citsukha, and Madhusūdanasarasvatī in support of some standpoint or other in Advaita. Even non-Advaitins for the purpose of criticism choose to state the doctrines of Advaita in the manner in which they have been set forth by Maṇḍana in his *Brahmasiddhi*. Hence the importance of Maṇḍana. Among the immortal names that adorn the history of Advaita, Maṇḍana's is a prominent one.

Maṇḍana in his *Brahmasiddhi* discusses at great length some of the important issues in the epistemology, metaphysics, and practical discipline of Advaita. Epistemological issues are taken up for consideration in the first two chapters of this monograph. Though Advaita accepts six sources of knowledge, only *śruti* which is the source of the knowledge of the ultimate reality is discussed in Chapter I. Problems such as the Mīmāṃsā explanation of the Upaniṣadic texts which are assertive, the role and status of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*, the relation between *śruti* and other sources of knowledge, etc., which arise in the context of scriptural authority are examined in this Chapter. Maṇḍana discusses only the

Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* in the *Brahmasiddhi*. The scope of Chapter II has been enlarged to cover all theories of error discussed in Indian Philosophy with a view to bring out the full significance of *anirvacanīya-khyāti* to which Maṇḍana is committed. I have made use of the standard works on Advaita besides the *Brahmasiddhi* for the criticism of other theories of error from the standpoint of Advaita. The nature of Brahman-Ātman, the ultimate reality, is discussed in Chapter III. In the history of Advaita, the dialectical method of criticism came to the foreground only in the post-Śaṅkara period. Śrīharṣa, Citsukha, Nṛsiṃhāśrama, Madhusūdanasarasvatī—to mention only a few—are some of the great dialecticians of the school of Advaita. The seeds of the dialectical method are to be found in the writings of Śaṅkara himself, though the development of this method was achieved by his followers. In the second *adhyāya* of his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śaṅkara makes use of dialectical criticism in the refutation of rival theories. When we trace the history of the dialectical methods in Advaita, we must, if we leave out Śaṅkara, start with Maṇḍana, who employs dialectics with ease, subtlety, and finesse. Maṇḍana is the first in the list of renowned dialecticians of lasting fame in refuting difference through dialectical arguments. Chapter IV of this monograph is devoted to the elucidation of Maṇḍana's critique of difference. Chapter V deals with the concept of *avidyā* which plays an important role in the discussion of metaphysical and epistemological issues in Advaita. The last chapter is concerned with the role of *karma* and *jñāna* in the scheme of discipline leading to liberation (*mokṣa*), the different theories about the relation between *karma* and *jñāna*, the nature of liberation, and the concept of *jīvanmukti*.

My grateful thanks are due to the following journals for permission to make use of my articles published



therein: (1) "Jīvanmukti: A new interpretation," *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Volume XII, No. 2, December 1962, Baroda, (2) "The place of *karma* in the Advaitic scheme of discipline," *Prabuddha Bharata*, Volume LXVIII, October 1963, Volume LXVIII, November 1963, Volume LXVIII, December 1963, Calcutta, (3) "Is there not erroneous cognition?" *The Journal of the Annamalai University*, Volume XXV, 1964, Annamalai-nagar, (4) "Can difference be perceived?" *Abhedananda Centenary Souvenir Volume*, 1967, Calcutta, and (5) "The concept of *avidyā*," *Indian Philosophical Annual*, Vol. II, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras.

I express my thanks to Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan not only for recommending this book for publication but also for writing a foreword to this book. I have greatly profited by his suggestions and guidance in the preparation of this monograph. I am thankful to Dr V. A. Devasenapathi, Director, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, for writing a foreword to this book as the general editor of the Madras University Philosophical Series and for his help and suggestions in completing this work. I am extremely thankful to Dr N. Veezhinathan who not only read the typescript and suggested improvements. but helped me in all aspects of the press work also. I am thankful to the authorities of the University of Madras for the financial grant towards the publication of this book.

I offer my obeisance to His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekharendra Sarasvatī, the Sage of Kāñchī, who is the living affirmation of the Truth of Advaita, who being the still point of the turning world makes every person do his work with joy and bear his burden with ease, and who is a shield unto those who put their trust in him. I take this opportunity to express my deep

sense of gratitude to my teacher, *Bhāṣya-bhāvajña* Śrī V.R. Kalyanasundara Sastrigal, Professor of Vedānta in Vivekananda College, Madras. I had the good fortune of studying *Brahmasiddhi* and other Advaita works sitting at his feet for several years. He helped me both as the pilot and the raft to go across the deep waters of the *Brahmasiddhi*.

This book I dedicate to my teacher  
 Who hails from Varahūr,  
 Who combining in his being  
 The aspects of *kalyāṇa* and *sundara*  
 Bears the name Kalyāṇasundara,  
 Proficient in Sāhitya and well versed in Vedānta,  
 Who adores Ādi Śaṅkara, the crest jewel of Advaita,  
 And other luminous pontiffs  
 That adorned the *Kāmakoti-pīṭha*  
 Like the lustrous gems that bedeck the divine *kirīṭa*;  
 Who worships with unswerving love and devotion  
 The Sage of Kāñchī and other preceptors of Advaita,  
 The great luminaries  
 That dispel the darkness of ignorance  
 Through the light of Śaṅkara,  
 The auspicious and immortal.

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BG</i>	...	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i>
<i>BS</i>	...	<i>Brahmasiddhi</i>
<i>BU</i>	...	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i>
<i>CU</i>	...	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
<i>ŚBGB</i>	...	<i>Śaṅkara's commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā</i>
<i>ŚSBV</i>	...	<i>Śrī Śaṅkarāśaṅkara-bhāṣya-vimarśaḥ</i>
<i>ŚU</i>	...	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i>
<i>TU</i>	...	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i>
<i>VP</i>	...	<i>Vedāntaparibhāṣā</i>





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## INTRODUCTION

The literature in Advaita abounds in innumerable original and independent treatises. The *Brahmasiddhi*<sup>1</sup> which is the earliest among the works of the *siddhi*-literature of the Advaita school is one such original and independent treatise. Three other important works belonging to this class of works are the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Sureśvara, the *Iṣṭasiddhi* of Vimuktātman, and the *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdanasarasvatī.

Maṇḍanamīśra, the author of the *Brahmasiddhi*, is one of the best known figures in Advaita and one of the few teachers of great renown who have left the characteristic hallmark of their thought on the perennial structure of Advaita. In addition to the *Brahmasiddhi*, he wrote three works on Mīmāṃsā—the *Mīmāṃsānukramaṇikā*,<sup>2</sup> the *Bhāvanāviveka*,<sup>3</sup> and the *Vidhiviveka*.<sup>4</sup> He wrote the *Sphoṭa-siddhi*<sup>5</sup> which deals with the philosophy of language, and the *Vibhramaviveka*<sup>6</sup> which discusses the theories of error.

1. Edited with Śaṅkhaṇḍī's commentary by S. Kuppuswami Sastri, Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series No. 4, 1937.

2. Edited by Ganganath Jha, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Benares.

3. The Princess of Wales Saraswati Bhavana Texts, Benares, No. 6.

4. The Pandit, Benares.

5. Madras University Sanskrit Series, No. 6, 1931.

6. Madras Oriental Series, No. 1, M. L. J. Press, Madras.

Maṇḍana's *Brahmasiddhi*, like the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Sureśvara and the *Iṣṭasiddhi* of Vimuktātman, consists partly of verse and partly of prose. The prose part is so designed and developed as to be a commentary on the verse. Very often it discusses several points not mentioned in the verse. There are two hundred and thirty-one verses in the entire work. The *Brahmasiddhi* consists of four chapters. The first chapter called *Brahma-kāṇḍa* sets forth the nature of Brahman through Scripture and reasoning. The place of *karma* and knowledge in the scheme of discipline leading to release (*mokṣa*) is also discussed towards the end of this chapter. The second chapter is called *Tarka-kāṇḍa*. It vindicates the validity of Scripture *vis-a-vis* perception and other means of knowledge in respect of Brahman, the non-dual, trans-empirical reality. The question whether the reality of difference (*bheda*) can be proved by any *pramāṇa* is also discussed in this chapter. The Vaiśeṣika view of absolute difference, the Bhāṭṭa theory of identity in difference, the Jaina theory of relative pluralism, and the Bauddha view that difference is real on which oneness is illusorily superimposed are examined at great length in this chapter. The third chapter called *Niyoga-kāṇḍa* establishes the view that Brahman-realization does not fall within the scope of injunction. Two other topics discussed in this chapter are the Advaita conception of release and the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti*. The last chapter is called *Siddhi-kāṇḍa*. It explains the view that the *Upaniṣad* teaches the negation of the world (*prapañcābhāva*). Further, it shows how the *Upaniṣad* conveys the sense of Brahman, not already known, through words whose meanings are known in empirical discourse.

There is no controversy about the authorship of the *Brahmasiddhi*. There are unquestionable evidences to show that Maṇḍana-miśra is the author of the *Brahmasiddhi*.



Ānandabodha in his *Nyāyamakaranda*<sup>7</sup> quotes a passage which he ascribes specifically to Maṇḍanamiśra, and that passage is found in the *Brahmasiddhi*. Citsukha in his *Tattvapradīpikā*<sup>8</sup> refers to a certain view which he says has been stated by Maṇḍanamiśra in his *Brahmasiddhi*. Śālikanātha of the Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā quotes in his *Prakaraṇapañcikā*<sup>9</sup> verse (2) of the second chapter and verse (104) of the third chapter of the *Brahmasiddhi*. Though he does not refer to either Maṇḍanamiśra or the *Brahmasiddhi* by name in this work, there are direct references to both in the *Nyāyasiddhi*<sup>10</sup> which is a commentary on Śālikanātha's *Prakaraṇapañcikā*. Śrīdharācārya in his *Nyāyakandalī*<sup>11</sup> mentions Maṇḍana's criticism of the Nyāya view of the self and of liberation ; and the passage which he quotes in this connection is from the *Brahmasiddhi*. These evidences clearly show that Maṇḍanamiśra is the author of the *Brahmasiddhi*.

The *Tattvasamīkṣā* by Vācaspatimiśra is the earliest commentary on the *Brahmasiddhi*. But no manuscript of this commentary has so far been found. Citsukha has written a commentary called *Abhiprāyaprakāśikā* on the *Brahmasiddhi*. There is yet another commentary on this

7. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, No. 38, p. 234. Ānandabodha says : “ *tadāhuratrabhavanto maṇḍanamiśrāḥ* ”, and quotes the first line of verse (78) of *Niyoga-kāṇḍa* of *BS*.

8. Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay, p. 140 : “ *tathā ca brahmasiddhau maṇḍanamiśraiḥ viparyyābhāvastu yukto'numātuḥ hetvabhāve phalābhāva iti.* ” Compare this with *BS*, Part I, p. 146, lines 8-9.

9. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, No. 17, p. 155 and p. 178.

10. See the MS. R. No. 3647 of the Triennial Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Vol. IV-C, p. 80.

11. Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series, No. 6, p. 6. Compare Śrīdharācārya's statement with *BS*, Part I, p. Stet 16, lines 14-15.

work, called *Bhāvaśuddhi* written by Ānandapūrṇa.<sup>12</sup> Śaṅkhaṇḍi has also written a commentary on this work. Of these four commentaries, Śaṅkhaṇḍi's commentary appears to be the latest. It is elaborate and exhaustive, clear and lucid. Śaṅkhaṇḍi, who is greatly influenced by Vācaspati-miśra, might have based his commentary on the *Tattvasamīkṣā*.

It is not difficult for us to fix the upper and the lower limits of the period when Maṇḍana must have lived. Maṇḍana quotes a passage from Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*<sup>13</sup> and also a verse from Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*<sup>14</sup> in the *Brahmasiddhi*. He cites passages from the *Śloka-vārtika*<sup>15</sup> of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa either for approval or criticism many a time. There are evidences to show that he was a younger contemporary of Prabhākara, for while he is critical of Prabhākara's *Bṛhatī*,<sup>16</sup> Prabhākara himself does not refer to Maṇḍana's views or works. Śālikanātha, a disciple of Prabhākara, quotes extracts from Maṇḍana's *Brahmasiddhi* and criticizes them in his *Prakaraṇapañcikā*. So Maṇḍana was later than Bhartṛhari and Gauḍapāda and earlier than Śālikanātha, and must have been a younger contemporary of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara. Though Maṇḍana does not quote or refer to any passage from Śaṅkara's works, there are internal evidences to show that he is quite conversant with Śaṅkara's standpoint, particularly with

12. These two commentaries by Citsukha and Ānandapūrṇa have been edited by N. S. Anantakrishna Sastri, Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series No. CLXI, 1963.

13. See *BS*, Part I, p. 26.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11, 38, 40, 55-59, 96, 108, 109, 147.

16. Compare *BS*, Part I, pp. 23-26, with *Bṛhatī* (Madras University Sanskrit Series, No. 3), pp. 20 and 22.

regard to *karma* and *jñāna*.<sup>17</sup> Maṇḍana's exposition of Advaita is based mainly on the *Upaniṣad*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahmasūtra*. So Maṇḍana must have been an elder contemporary of Śaṅkara. There is no unanimity among scholars with regard to the date of Śaṅkara. Some scholars assign Śaṅkara to 5th century B. C. Some others fix the date of Śaṅkara as 8th century A. D. Since there is so much of uncertainty about the date of Śaṅkara, we cannot fix the date of Maṇḍana by relying upon the date of Śaṅkara. Though we find it difficult to determine the date of Maṇḍana, we can confidently assign him to the period later than Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari and earlier than Śālikanātha. He must have been a contemporary of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara, and Śaṅkara.

17. See *BS*, Part I, pp. 26-38, and also p. 132, 1.20 to p. 133, 1.3. Also see Śaṅkhaṇḍī's commentary, *BS*, Part II, p. 264, 11. 12-24: "bhagavadpādīyamamatamupanyasyati—ye tviti. taddūṣayati—taditi."

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEANS OF KNOWING REALITY

#### 1

According to Advaita, the Absolute called Brahman or Ātman is of the nature of bliss (*ānandam*). It is one (*ekam*) and eternal having no end or beginning (*amṛtam*, *ajam*). It is of the nature of knowledge (*viññānam*). It is immutable (*akṣaram*). Though it is the basis of the entire world (*sarvam*), it is totally different from everything superimposed on it (*asarvam*). It is the perfection of security (*abhayaṃ*).

The first question that we have to discuss is about the source of our knowledge of the Absolute whose nature has been stated above in the words of Maṇḍana.<sup>1</sup>

Advaita accepts six sources of knowledge: (1) perception (*pratyakṣa*), (2) inference (*anumāna*), (3) comparison (*upamāna*), (4) presumption (*arthāpatti*), (5) non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*), and (6) verbal testimony (*śabda*). Verbal testimony is of two kinds—that which is personal (*pauruṣeya*) in the form of the written or spoken testimony of a trustworthy person (*āpta*) and that which is impersonal (*apauruṣeya*), viz, *śruti* or the Vedic testimony. Advaita holds the view that the Absolute can be known only through *śruti*

1. Maṇḍana explains the nature of Brahman in the opening invocatory verse of his *Brahmasiddhi* as follows:

“*ānandamekamamṛtamajam viññānamakṣaram  
asarvaṃ sarvamabhayaṃ namasyāmaḥ prajāpatim*”

or Vedic testimony and not through any other source of knowledge.

Perception which can reveal the existence of an empirical entity cannot be the source of the knowledge of Brahman which is trans-empirical. Inference presupposes, and is dependent on, perception. Two conditions have to be fulfilled for getting inferential knowledge: (1) the perception of the probans (*liṅga-darśana*) in the minor term (*pakṣa*) and (2) the knowledge of the invariable relation (*vyāpti-jñāna*) between the probans and the probandum, *i.e.* the middle term and the major term. The role of perception is apparent with regard to the first condition. Though inference is a distinct source of knowledge, it is nevertheless dependent on perception with the result that its scope, like that of perception, is restricted to things empirical. Comparison also cannot give us the knowledge of the non-dual Absolute. We get the knowledge of similarity (*sādrśya*) through comparison. Our knowledge that "The cow is like the *gavaya*" is obtained through *upamāna*. Two things that are similar, *e.g.* a cow and a *gavaya*, are different from each other. Since the knowledge of similarity obtained through comparison presupposes difference, comparison cannot be the means of the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. Presumption also presupposes difference. It is the postulation of what explains through the knowledge of what is to be explained. It is a process of reasoning in which we reconcile two apparently inconsistent facts. A person is alive; but he is not at home. The two facts of his living and of his absence from home are reconciled by assuming that he is somewhere outside his home. The process of reasoning involved in *arthāpatti* presupposes difference between two things which are apparently inconsistent with each other. It follows that the knowledge of the non-dual reality cannot be obtained through presumption. Non-cognition is the source of our knowledge of what is non-existent (*abhāva*). It cannot *prima facie* give us the knowledge

of what is existent. Brahman, the Absolute, is that-which-is. It is existent. *Anupalabdhi* cannot, therefore, be the source of our knowledge of the ever-existent Brahman. Of the two kinds of verbal testimony mentioned earlier, the verbal testimony of a trustworthy person is valid only in empirical matters. It means that the Absolute which is trans-empirical cannot be known through the verbal testimony of a trustworthy person. So Advaita maintains that Brahman or Ātman which is the absolute reality and which is trans-empirical can be known only through *śruti* or Vedic testimony. It may be stated here that of the two parts of the *Veda*, the ritual part (*karma-kāṇḍa*) and the knowledge part (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*), the latter which consists of the Upaniṣads intimates the non-dual, ever-existent Brahman.

## 2

Some of the objections raised by the Mīmāṃsakas to show that the existent Brahman cannot be known through the Vedic testimony may now be considered. The Mīmāṃsakas maintain that action is the final import of secular as well as scriptural sentences. According to the Mīmāṃsakas of the Prābhākara school, the meanings of secular words are learnt as follows. A superior elder commands an intermediate to bring a cow and to bind a horse. By observing the action of the intermediate elder, a young boy comes to understand the meanings of the words "cow" and "horse". It means that the meanings of words are learnt only as they occur in injunctive sentences which have their import in action. The relation between words and the objects denoted by them is known, according to them, only when words occur in injunctive sentences leading to action. It cannot be known when words refer to existent things. What is true of secular sentences is equally true of Vedic sentences. The *Veda*, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, is essentially a book of commandments. It consists of injunctions and prohibitions (*vidhi-niṣedha*).

Assertive sentences found in the *Veda*, the Mīmāṃsakas maintain, are significant only when they are construed with the appropriate injunctive texts. So the entire *Veda* has its purport only in action, i.e. in something which is to be accomplished (*sādhya*). The Absolute or Brahman of Advaita is ever-existent; it is not something yet to be accomplished by action. Since words are significant only when they are related to action, and since the Vedic words have no significance in respect of the existent Brahman which is not related to action in any way, the Mīmāṃsakas conclude that the Vedic testimony is not competent to give knowledge of Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

The argument of the Mīmāṃsakas stated above deserves careful consideration. Maṇḍana first of all argues at great length to show that action is not the import of all secular statements. Consider, for example, assertive sentences like, "Luckily you are happy," "A child is born to you," and so on which do not prompt a person to action. Sentences of this type give information about an existent something, a certain state of affairs, and so they cannot be dismissed as meaningless. It cannot be said that the person who is informed of the birth of a child to him is ordered to be happy, and that therefore some action is enjoined. It is absurd to say that happiness can be produced by an injunction. When a person listens to the statement, "A child is born to you," there is, Maṇḍana argues, nothing to be done by him as there is no scope for action so far as he is concerned either with regard to the means (*upāya*), viz child-birth, or the end (*upēya*), viz happiness.<sup>3</sup> Child-birth which is the means of happiness in this case has already taken place; and there is nothing to be done thereto. Nor is any action required with regard to happiness which takes place of its

2. *BS*, Part I, p. 23.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

own accord as soon as he understands the meaning of the statement. It may be that after getting the information about the birth of a child he does several activities. The purport of the statement, however, is not in those activities.

Let us consider another example given by Maṇḍana. The assertive sentence, "There is wealth in this place," gives information about an existent something. A person, after getting this information, may endeavour to get the wealth or just keep quiet. The purport of the statement is only in the state of affairs conveyed by it. If he does something to get the wealth, or if he is indifferent to it, it is because he remembers at that time what he has learnt previously, *viz* that wealth is beneficial or that it is harmful. What he does or fails to do does not constitute the import of the sentence, "There is wealth in this place." It may be the case that the information conveyed by this sentence is instrumental to a certain action that follows it. It may also be the case that the ensuing action might have been intended by the person who uttered it. Though he stated, "There is wealth in this place," it might have been his intention to say, "Take the wealth that is in this place." Nevertheless, the import, Maṇḍana says, is only in the state of affairs conveyed by the sentence by virtue of the capacity inherent in it. Or, consider another example. A person mistakes a rope for a snake, and is frightened. In order to remove his fear, we do not subject him to an injunction "Don't be afraid," but we give him the information that the object in front is only a rope and not a snake. The import of the assertive sentence "That is a rope" is not in any action to be done. At the same time the sentence is not without significance. What is true of secular statements which are assertive is also true of Vedic texts such as "Brahman is real, knowledge, and infinite"<sup>4</sup> which are assertive. The



contention of the Mīmāṃsakas that the purport of the entire *Veda* is in action is wrong, for there are Upaniṣadic texts like "Brahman is real, knowledge, and bliss" which only set forth the nature of the existent Brahman. Texts of this kind are significant in and by themselves. They are not at all complementary to injunctive texts. And so the question of construing them with injunctive texts does not arise. The Upaniṣads which intimate Brahman are *śruti*. It is, therefore, wrong to say that *śruti* or Vedic testimony is not the source of knowledge of the existent Brahman.

The Prābhākara view that the relation between words and the objects denoted by them can be known only when words occur in injunctive sentences leading to action is equally untenable, as it is possible to know the meanings of words even otherwise. Consider the following case mentioned by Maṇḍana. A person knows the meanings of the case terminations and the meanings of all the words except the meaning of the word "fire-wood" (*kāṣṭha*) used in the sentence, "Devadatta cooks food in a pot by fire-wood." He knows that *kāṣṭhaiḥ* is the instrumental case of *kāṣṭha*; and this knowledge, argues Maṇḍana, enables the person to understand that the object which is the instrument (*karana*) by which food is cooked is the meaning of the word *kāṣṭha*.<sup>5</sup> So there is no justification for the Prābhākara view that the significative potency (*śakti*) of words can be known only when words occur in injunctive sentences. The Upaniṣads are meaningful in their own right, and what they convey can be known even though they are not injunctive. The meanings of words like "short", "long", "gross", "fine", etc. are known to us. We are inclined to think that the Ātman, the ultimate reality, is short, long, gross, fine, and so on due to ignorance. The *Upaniṣad* intimates the Ātman by negating the attributes superimposed on it. It says that

5. *BS*, Part I, p. 25.

the Ātman is not gross, not fine, etc.<sup>6</sup> The function of the negative particle is to convey the non-existence of that with which the Ātman seems to be associated. So when the *Upaniṣad* says that the Ātman is neither gross nor fine, there is no injunction leading to action. Nevertheless the text is significant and conveys the knowledge of the ultimate reality.<sup>7</sup>

There is yet another argument advanced by the Mīmāṃsakas to show that *śruti* or Vedic testimony cannot intimate the existent Brahman. If Brahman is already known through any means of knowledge other than *śruti*, then *śruti* only makes a restatement (*anuvāda*) of it, and has therefore no validity (*prāmāṇyam*). If Brahman is not known through any *pramāṇa* other than *śruti*, then *śruti* cannot intimate the existent Brahman for the simple reason that words are significant and denote objects only when they occur in injunctive sentences leading to action. Since Brahman which is ever-existent cannot be accomplished by means of action, it does not fall within the scope of *śruti*. Hence the Vedic testimony cannot be the means of knowing Brahman.<sup>8</sup>

This argument cannot stand examination. The contention that words are significant only when they occur in injunctive sentences which lead to action has already been refuted. The nature of Brahman which is trans-empirical cannot be known through perception and other sources of knowledge whose scope is restricted to the empirical realm. Only through the *Upaniṣadic* texts which are assertive we come to know that Brahman is of the nature of knowledge and bliss, and that it is no other

6. *BU*, III, viii, 8.

7. *BS*, Part I, p. 26.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

than the inward Self of the individual.<sup>9</sup> Further, it can be shown, argues Maṇḍana, that the *Upaniṣad* intimates the nature of Brahman, which is not already known, through words whose meanings are known in common parlance without providing any room for the criticism that the *Upaniṣad* becomes a restatement. Let us consider first of all the following example which Maṇḍana gives in order to drive home his point. When some one makes the following statement, "In a particular island there is a bird whose feet are made of emerald, whose beak is made of ruby, and whose wings are made of gold and silver," we understand the meaning it conveys. We know that it gives information about a peculiar bird. The meanings of the words "bird", "ruby", "emerald", "wing", "gold", etc. which occur in the sentence are already known to us. However, the sentence intimates a unique bird not already known to us; and so it is not a restatement (*anuvāda*). Since what it conveys is not known through any other source, even though it makes use of words whose meanings are already known to us, it deserves the claim to be the source of knowledge so far as that bird is concerned.<sup>10</sup> It can be said as a general principle that a sentence must be admitted to be a source of knowledge if it conveys a sense not already known, through words whose meanings are

9. *TU*, II, i, 1 :

"satyaṁ jñānāmanantaṁ brahma"

*BU*, III, ix, 28.7 :

"vijñānamānantaṁ brahma"

*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, II :

"ayamātmā brahma"

10. *BS*, Part I, p. 157.

Also see Śaṅkara's commentary on *BU*, II, i, 20 : "Scripture does not speak about an unknown thing without having recourse to conventional words and their meanings." (*na ca laukikapadapadārthāś-rayavyatirekeṇa āgamenā śakyamajñātaṁ vastvantaramavagamayitum*)

already known. The validity of the Upaniṣads can be justified in the same way, because they intimate Brahman, which is otherwise not known, through words whose meanings are already known to us in empirical discourse. We explain things in the world in terms of cause-effect relation; and so the meaning of the word "cause" is already known to us. When the *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman is "that from which all these beings are born",<sup>11</sup> it reveals Brahman as a unique cause of the entire world (*jagat-kāraṇa-viśeṣa*). What we know so far is that some object is the cause of something else. The *Upaniṣad* does not speak of any ordinary cause (*kāraṇa-sāmānya*) we are familiar with, but it speaks of the extraordinary cause (*kāraṇa-viśeṣa*) which accounts for the entire world.<sup>12</sup> And this information conveyed by the *Upaniṣad* is new, though it seeks to convey the sense through words whose meanings are already known to us. Again, as a result of our acquaintance with the things of the world we know the meanings of the words "being" (*sat*), "gross", "minute", and so on. We also know the meaning of negation used in sentences such as "This object is not blue," "This tree is not tall." In view of this knowledge we have, there is no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the *Upaniṣad* when it says that Brahman is "neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long..."<sup>13</sup> The *Upaniṣad* reveals Brahman as *sat* or Being which is free from all specifications that can be thought of, though it employs words whose meanings are already known to us. What we know through the *Upaniṣad* is something new, and also intelligible. The *Upaniṣad* is, therefore, the means of our knowledge of the existent Brahman.<sup>14</sup>

11. *TU*, III, i, 1.

12. *BS*, Part II, p. 297.

13. *BU*, III, viii, 8.

14. *BS*, Part I, v.2, p. 156.

It is no argument to say that Brahman which is free from qualities and action, class feature and relation, cannot be thought of much less conveyed by speech. The *Upaniṣad*, Maṇḍana says, intimates the non-dual Brahman by negating the attributes and relations superimposed on it. Just as we make a person understand the reality of gold (*suvarṇa-tattvam*) by divesting it of the various forms such as necklace, bangles, and so on with which it is associated, even so the *Upaniṣad* sets forth the nature of Brahman by negating qualities, action, relations and differences which are illusorily superimposed on it.<sup>15</sup> It is this technique that underlies the celebrated Upaniṣadic teaching that Brahman is "not this", "not this".<sup>16</sup> Maṇḍana quotes in this connection the traditional saying that the nature of Brahman, the trans-phenomenal reality, is explained by superimposition (*adhyāropa*) and negation (*apavāda*).<sup>17</sup> He also cites the authority of the author of the *Vākyapadīya* who says, "That is real which survives the negation of forms."<sup>18</sup> We superimpose qualities and relations such as omniscience, omnipotence, causality, etc. on the Absolute as they help us to understand it to start with. This is the stage of superimposition. On closer examination we find that the Absolute which is super-sensuous is free from qualities and relations; and so we negate it of all qualities and relations. This is the stage of negation. Negation cannot be total. In order to be significant negation requires a basic affirmation. Brahman, the Absolute, is the basis of all negation. It is that which is affirmed while everything else we falsely attribute to it is denied of it. So the *Upaniṣad*

15. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

16. *BU*, III, ix, 26.

17. *BS*, Part I, p. 26 :

"*adhyāropāpavādābhyām niṣprapañcam prapañcyate.*"

18. *Vākyapadīya*, III, ii, 11.

reveals the trans-phenomenal and supra-relational reality by negating distinctions of names and forms falsely superimposed thereon.<sup>19</sup>

Even though the Upaniṣads intimate the existent Brahman, they must be construed, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, as injunctive lest they lose their validity. The Mīmāṃsakas argue that since an existential or assertive sentence (*siddhārtha-vākya*) conveys what is already known through other sources of knowledge, it is only a restatement (*anuvāda*), and it is also not independent in respect of what it conveys. So it ceases to be a source of knowledge. This difficulty, the Mīmāṃsakas hold, does not arise in the case of an injunctive sentence (*vidhāyaka-vākya*). Consider, for instance, a text which enjoins the performance of *agnihotra*. What this text conveys cannot be known through any other *pramāṇa*. It is also independent in respect of what it conveys. But the Upaniṣads which are existential are not independent in respect of what they say; and they only restate what is otherwise known. The Mīmāṃsakas, therefore, argue that the Upaniṣads must be construed as injunctive for the sake of their validity.<sup>20</sup>

This argument cannot be accepted. The basic issue to be considered is: Does a sentence become a restatement when what it conveys is already intimated by some other *pramāṇa*? Or, does it become a restatement just because it intimates something existent? Maṇḍana readily admits that a sentence is a restatement if it is not original and independent in what it conveys. Such a sentence does not have independent validity (*anapekṣatva-lakṣaṇa-prāmāṇyam*),

19. BS, Part I, v.2, p. 23:

“ āmnāyataḥ prasiddhiṁ ca kavayo'sya prācakṣate  
bheda-prapañcavilaya-dvāreṇa ca nirūpaṇām ”

20. Ibid., verses 10-12, p. 79.

and therefore cannot be a source of knowledge. But it is wrong to say that a sentence becomes a restatement simply because it intimates an existent object (*siddha-vastu*), even though what it conveys is entirely new, and is independent of other means of knowledge. A means of knowledge, Maṇḍana observes, has a dependent nature when the information it conveys is obtained through some other *pramāṇa*, irrespective of the fact whether what it conveys relates to something that exists or something to be done.<sup>21</sup> Though perception and inference intimate what is existent, they are nevertheless admitted to be *pramāṇas* inasmuch as they are independent (*nirapekṣa*) in the discharge of their work. In the same way, though the Upaniṣadic text is existential in character, it must be admitted to be valid inasmuch as it is original and independent in what it conveys. It is necessary in this connection to bear in mind the distinction between the nature of a Vedic text and that of human utterance. The latter which is personal (*pauruṣeya*) is bound to be dependent on others, irrespective of the fact whether it is assertive or injunctive. Śabara lays stress on this idea in his commentary on the second *sūtra* of the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*. He says: "In the case of teachings emanating from human sources, the idea is formed to the effect, 'This man, the speaker, knows this thing to be such-and-such,' and not as 'This thing is such-and-such.'<sup>22</sup> The utterance of a human being carries an implicit reference to other *pramāṇas* in terms of which its validity is ascertained. So a sentence has a dependent nature only if it issues from a person. A Vedic sentence is impersonal. And what it conveys—no matter whether it is assertive or injunctive—is not obtained from any other source. The

21. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

"*tāsmādbhūtārthe'bhūtārthe vā adhigamāntarasaṃsparsaḥ  
pramāṇāntarāpekṣāhetuḥ*"

22. *Śābara-bāṣya*, I, i, 2.

A. 3

Upaniṣads which are impersonal (*apauruṣeya*) and independent (*nirapekṣa*) and which intimate the trans-empirical, ever-existent Brahman not known through any other *pramāṇa* must, therefore, be accorded validity; and there is no need to construe them as injunctive. Even if it be said for the sake of argument that Brahman which is existent (*siddha-vastu*) is also made known by other *pramāṇas*, the Upaniṣads which are *śruti* do not lose their status as an independent source of knowledge. Both perception and inference are admitted to be distinct sources of knowledge. Both of them are *pramāṇas* in their own right with regard to what is existent. In a particular case, let us say, we not only perceive the fire on a hill but also prove it for the sake of additional confirmation by means of inference. The object known through both the *pramāṇas* is the same—an existent something (*siddha-vastu*). Nevertheless, we do not say that perception has a dependent nature and loses its validity as a *pramāṇa* just because what is made known by it, is also known through inference. The same thing is also true of inference. If so, even if what is intimated by the Upaniṣads which are existential is also known through other *pramāṇas*, the Upaniṣads do not lose their validity. However, the real position is that Brahman which is revealed by the Upaniṣads falls outside the scope of *pramāṇas* like perception. And the Upaniṣads, like the injunctive texts of the *Veda*, have independent validity just because they are impersonal (*apauruṣeya*).<sup>29</sup>

## 3

There is a clear demarcation of the scope of validity claimed for *śruti* and perception in their role as *pramāṇas*. Perception is a source of knowledge of things empirical. It gives us knowledge which accords with our experience of things at the empirical level. It will lose its validity if



what it conveys is contrary to our day-to-day experience. It means that, since perception has only empirical validity (*vyāvahārikam prāmāṇyam*), it cannot be a source of the knowledge of the trans-empirical reality, which is one and non-dual. Further, since the entire empirical realm is conditioned by the beginningless *avidyā*, perception which functions only at the empirical level suffers from an inherent defect due to *avidyā* with the result that what it conveys is not ultimately real. Thus perception as a source of knowledge has its scope restricted to the empirical order; at the same time on account of the inherent defect in it caused by *avidyā*, it is not competent to reveal the nature of the ultimate reality, and its testimony, which suffers contradiction by the right knowledge of Brahman, is not ultimately valid. Its defective nature and its claim to empirical validity are not at all opposed to each other.<sup>24</sup> The scope of *śruti* as a source of knowledge is restricted to the trans-empirical level. It reveals what is super-sensuous (*adṛṣṭārtha*). The Upaniṣads which form the concluding portions of the *Veda* intimate Brahman, the non-dual, trans-empirical reality. We do not depend on *śruti* for getting the knowledge of things empirical. Even if there were a hundred *śruti* texts which declare that fire is cold and that ice is hot, they cannot be valid.<sup>25</sup> *Śruti* does not and cannot claim empirical validity because what it says about the nature of reality is diametrically opposed to what we know in our empirical experience. If it is even suspected to be defective in respect of what it conveys, it will lose the only validity it has. However, such a contingency does not arise, because *śruti* is *apauruṣeya*; and since it is accepted as a *pramāṇa*, it follows that it is the

24. *Ibid.*, p.40.

25. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, XVIII, 66: "Even a hundred *śruti* texts which declare fire to be cold or non-luminous will not attain authoritativeness."

source of our knowledge of the ultimate reality. Since the transcendental reality which is outside the sphere of perception can be known only through the *Upaniṣad* which is *śruti*, we have to depend only on the evidence of *śruti* in this regard.<sup>26</sup>

Strictly speaking, there can be no conflict between *śruti* and perception, for each is valid in its own sphere. Just as *śruti* does not purport to give information about the things of the empirical world, so also perception does not claim to speak about the nature of the trans-empirical reality. The question of conflict between *śruti* and perception will arise only when what is known through perception is claimed to be ultimately valid or what is known through *śruti* is disputed on the basis of perception. Can the validity of *śruti* according to which reality is one and non-dual be questioned on the ground that the evidence of perception is to the contrary? There are critics who answer this question in the affirmative. Perception, they argue, testifies to the existence of a plurality of things which are different from one another. It means that the evidence of perception comes into conflict with that of *śruti*. Though both *śruti* and perception are *pramāṇas*, the latter, the critics maintain, will prevail over the former when their evidences are conflicting.

The argument stated above is untenable. When the evidences of *śruti* and perception are conflicting in so far as they relate to the nature of reality, the evidence of *śruti* alone, says Maṇḍana, will hold good and not that of perception. We perceive many things in our day-to-day experience. The cognition of plurality of things is natural (*nisargaja*) to all of us who are ignorant, whereas the knowledge of non-duality which is yet to come (*āgantuka*) through *śruti* is not natural (*anisargaja*). Moreover, not all people are

able to obtain the saving knowledge of non-duality, through *śruti*. The knowledge of non-difference conveyed by *śruti* is subsequent to the perception of difference. According to the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, VI, v, 54, "If two cognitions are related as prior and posterior, the prior is weaker, like *prakṛti*."<sup>27</sup> Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa says: "Without sublating the previous, the subsequent cognition cannot take place."<sup>28</sup> Maṇḍana concludes on the basis of the *Mīmāṃsā* principle stated above that when there is conflict between the earlier cognition of difference obtained through perception and the subsequent cognition of non-difference obtained through *śruti*, the latter is powerful and predominant.<sup>29</sup> No sooner does the knowledge of non-duality take place than the cognition of plurality gets sublated.

There is yet another point to be stressed in support of the unquestionable validity of *śruti*. While *śruti* which is impersonal (*apauruṣeya*) is absolutely free from defects, perception cannot claim such immunity. One can doubt the evidence of perception on the ground that sometimes what is cognized through perception turns out to be false as in the case of illusion. If perception is known to betray us in some cases, it is quite possible, one may argue, that it misleads us in all cases. Further, it is only through *śruti* that we understand how the evidence of perception is conditioned by the beginningless *avidyā*. For example, a person identifies himself with his body and superimposes the attributes of the body on the Self as when he says, "I am stout, lean, etc." *Śruti* tells us that the Self is neither stout nor lean and that the identification of the Self with the body, which is due to *avidyā*, is wrong, and sets aside the evidence of perception which is to the contrary.

27. "*paurvāphare pūrvadaurbalyam prakṛtiyat.*"

28. *Ślokavārtika*, p.62.

29. *BS*, Part I, p.40.

While we are able to show on the basis of the knowledge obtained through *śruti* that the evidence of perception is wrong, we cannot show that what is known through *śruti* is false by relying on the evidence of perception. We cannot even suspect the possibility of defect in *śruti* which is impersonal. *Śruti* would cease to be a *pramāṇa* if its validity is even suspected.

When the issue of *śruti* versus perception is raised, several reasons are adduced in support of the superior claims of perception. But none of them, according to Maṇḍana, are tenable. We shall consider one by one these arguments.

It is first of all argued that since *śruti* which is *śabda-pramāṇa* has to depend upon perception it cannot hold its own against the latter. *Śabda* as a *pramāṇa* can come into existence only with the help of the sense-organs, and not independently of them. To question on the basis of *śruti* the knowledge conveyed by them is to question the very source from which it comes, viz the sense-organs; and this would undermine the very existence of *śabda-pramāṇa* which is dependent upon them. While *śabda* depends upon *pratyakṣa* for its very existence, the latter does not depend upon the former. This argument is of no avail as it overlooks the work which a *pramāṇa* qua *pramāṇa* has to do. *Śabda* has to depend upon *pratyakṣa* only for its genesis (*svarūpa-siddhi*) and not for doing its work as a *pramāṇa*. A distinctive source of knowledge that it is, *śabda* does not require the help of *pratyakṣa* in generating a valid cognition. If it cannot discharge its function on its own, it would cease to be a *pramāṇa*. The dependence of a *pramāṇa* on another for its origination is not detrimental to its status as a *pramāṇa*; but its dependence on another in respect of its work would jeopardize its status as a *pramāṇa*. Inference, for example, is dependent on perception for its genesis. Nevertheless, it is admitted to be a source of

knowledge since it does its work as a *pramāṇa* independently of perception. So the dependence of *śabda* on *pratyakṣa* for its genesis cannot be cited as a valid argument for establishing the supremacy of the latter, when their evidences regarding the nature of the ultimate reality are conflicting. It is only from *śabda* (i.e. *śruti*) that we get the knowledge of the ultimate reality (*tattva-darśanam*), though *śabda* comes into existence through the instrumentality of *pratyakṣa* which has only empirical validity.<sup>30</sup>

We shall now consider the second argument. The knowledge obtained through perception, it is argued, is in agreement with our experience. But this cannot be said with regard to the knowledge obtained through *śabda*, for there are instances of discrepancy between the cognition conveyed by *śabda* and the state of affairs which it refers to. It means that the evidence of perception which is dependable can never be questioned on the authority of *śabda* whose evidence is sometimes erroneous. This argument, says Maṇḍana, is equally untenable. If a verbal testimony turns out to be false eventually, it is because of the defective nature of the source from which it comes, and not because of any inherent defect in *śabda* as such. For example, the verbal testimony of an untrustworthy person is bound to be contrary to experience. The discrepancy between the cognition conveyed by his utterance and the state of affairs should be attributed to the defect of the person (*puruṣa-doṣa*) and not to *śabda* as such. There are also cases wherein the cognition obtained through perception is not in agreement with the given state of affairs. As in the case of *śabda*, here also we account for the discrepancy by following the same principle. When the evidence of perception turns out to be false as in the case of shell-silver illusion, it is because of the defect of the person and not

because of any inherent defect in perception as a *pramāṇa*.<sup>31</sup>

That perception should be given precedence over *śabda* is further argued on the basis of the principle of *anavakāśa* versus *sāvakāśa*. By providing a suitable content, *śabda* can be made *sāvakāśa*, i.e. that which has had its scope fulfilled. *Śruti* texts which speak of the non-dual nature of the ultimate reality, it is argued, can be interpreted figuratively. Or it can be said that the Upaniṣadic texts have no meaning and that they are intended for the purpose of recitation (*japa*). By thus providing a content and making it significant, *śruti* can be made *sāvakāśa*. But the work of perception cannot be accounted for in this way, and so perception is *anavakāśa*, i.e. that whose scope remains unfulfilled. Between that which is *sāvakāśa* and that which is *anavakāśa*, the latter is stronger and should be given priority. It means that since perception is *anavakāśa*, it prevails over *śabda* when there is a conflict between them. Maṇḍana agrees that the principle cited in this argument is no doubt valid. If it is properly established that *śabda* is *sāvakāśa*, there is no denying the fact that it becomes weaker than perception. When non-duality is the purport of *śruti* texts in their primary sense, there is no justification, says Maṇḍana, to explain them as conveying some other sense (*anya-viśaya*) by means of secondary or figurative interpretation. It is no argument to say that the secondary or figurative sense is resorted to in order to avoid conflict with another *pramāṇa*. When the different sources of knowledge are independent of one another in their claims to validity, there is no need to interpret or alter the evidence of one in such a way that it does not come into conflict with that of another. When we explain a sentence by adopting the secondary sense, it is not because of the fear of contradiction by another *pramāṇa*. Maṇḍana

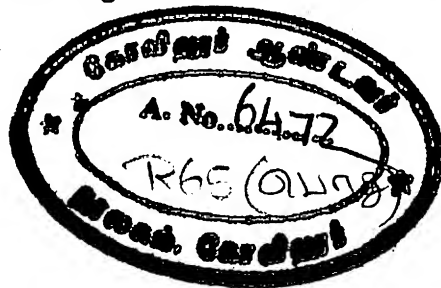
31. *Ibid.*

observes that when the purport intended to be conveyed by a sentence is not obtained through the primary sense, the secondary sense is brought in.<sup>32</sup> It is, therefore, wrong to say that the primary sense of the non-dual texts must be replaced by the secondary or figurative sense with a view to escape contradiction by perception. Nor can it be said that the non-dual Upaniṣadic texts have no meaning and that they are intended only for the purpose of recitation. When Śabara says that there are *śruti* texts which purport to instruct on rituals, he takes it that these texts have meaning. Just as *śruti* texts connected with rituals have meaning, even so the Upaniṣadic texts related to Brahman have meaning. Hence it is wrong to say that the Upaniṣadic texts do not convey any meaning and that they are intended for the purpose of recitation.

The supremacy of perception is sought to be established in another way. Perception, it is argued, comes first; because all of us make use of perception from the beginning; and *śruti* (i.e. *śabda-pramāṇa*) which requires the prior perception of words and their meanings comes later. When the evidences of *śruti* and perception are conflicting, either *śruti* must be declared invalid or its meaning must be so construed that it will accord with the evidence of perception. It follows, according to this argument, that *śruti* cannot hold its own when it comes into conflict with perception. This argument, too, is not valid. Maṇḍana says that this argument, far from strengthening perception, undermines it in relation to *śruti*. As sources of knowledge, both perception and *śruti* are independent of each other; and so there is no need to construe the meaning of *śruti* in accordance with the evidence of perception. Cognition through perception comes first; knowledge of the non-dual reality conveyed by *śruti* comes later. When two cognitions, with reference to

32. *Ibid.*, p.42.

A. 4



the same object, are related as earlier and later and when they are opposed, the subsequent cognition cannot take place without sublating the earlier one. Just as the subsequent cognition of shell even as it arises sublates the earlier cognition of silver, even so the knowledge of the non-dual reality as soon as it arises from *śruti* sublates the perceptual cognition of duality. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa observes: "Where two (sources), being related as prior and posterior, convey their knowledge independently of each other, the posterior is the stronger of the two."<sup>33</sup> As stated earlier, perception and *śabda* play their respective roles as *pramāṇas* independently of each other; and the knowledge of non-duality conveyed by *śruti* is subsequent to the perceptual knowledge of plurality. Maṇḍana argues that by applying the principle of the subsequent sublating the earlier (*parabalīyastva-nyāya* or *apaśccheda-nyāya*) we have to say that the earlier cognition through perception is invalid.<sup>34</sup>

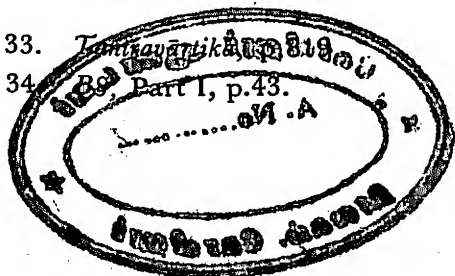
There is one more argument to be considered. It is argued that since *śruti* is not consistent in its teaching it cannot be relied on. The *Veda* consists of two parts: that which deals with rituals (*karma-kāṇḍa*) and that which is concerned with knowledge (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*). The *karma-kāṇḍa* of the *Veda* whose purport is in action teaches the rules governing rituals, the method of performing them, and the fruits that accrue to one who performs them. It accepts the reality of difference (*bheda*), for it has to admit such things as sacrifice, one who performs it, the ingredients required for performing it, the fruit that accrues therefrom, etc. which are different from one another. The *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of the *Veda* which is concerned with the knowledge of the ultimate reality has nothing to do with action. Its import is in non-difference (*abheda*). The *Veda*, the critic holds, is a house divided against itself, because while one

33.

Tantirayārtikā, p. 319.

34.

Part I, p. 43.





part of it has its purport in difference, the other part has its purport in non-difference. Even as it is, *śruti* whose teaching is confusing (*vyākula*) because of the inherent conflict in it cannot be relied on ; and it has to be set aside when its evidence comes into conflict with that of perception.

The above argument, Maṇḍana says, is wrong. It proceeds on the untenable assumption that the purport of the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the *Veda* is in difference. Maṇḍana argues that the injunctive texts about rituals (*karma-vidhis*) do not purport to instruct us on the reality of difference. They do not convey the knowledge of difference, which is novel and which is otherwise unattained. On the contrary, they only *restate* what is already known to us in our day-to-day experience. We not only speak of the means-end relation, but also stress that the "means" must be employed in the correct "method" for attaining the desired "end". It means that in our day-to-day experience we are fully conversant with the category of difference involving the triple aspects (*aṁśatraya*), viz the method, the means, and the end. When the injunctive texts of the *karma-kāṇḍa* says, "This object is to be attained through this means in this manner," it does not purport to teach "difference"; on the contrary, by assuming difference which involves the triple aspect of the method, the means, and the end, it only gives information about the means-end relation.<sup>35</sup> The information it gives will be useful only to those who have chosen that end ; and it is open to them to act or not to act on that information. Others who do not care for that end are nonchalant to the information contained in the injunctive text. Maṇḍana drives home this point by citing the case of *śyena-yāga* which is performed for the purpose of destroying one's enemy. Infliction of pain and injury on any creature

35. *Ibid.*, "te tu siddham bhedamupāśritya 'idamanena ittham sādhayet' iti puruṣahitānuśāsanapradhānāḥ."

is not allowed by Scripture. Nevertheless, Scripture gives information about the performance of *śyena-yāga*. One should not conclude from this that Scripture purports to teach infliction of pain. The instruction relating to the performance of *śyena-yāga* is intended only for those who are overpowered with envy and anger. One who is not swayed by emotions takes no notice of that instruction. In the same way, the instruction about the performance of *jyotiṣṭoma* involving the triple aspect of the end, the means, and the method, is intended only for the ignorant who care for perishable ends such as heaven. Just as a person who is calm and self-controlled ignores the instruction about the performance of *śyena-yāga*, even so one who, possessing the discriminating knowledge of the eternal and the ephemeral, does not care for the enjoyment of pleasure here and hereafter does not pay heed to the instruction about the performance of *jyotiṣṭoma*. By assuming the category of difference which is empirically established, the injunctive texts of the *karma-kāṇḍa* give information about the means-end relation; they do not have their purport in "difference". So the contention that the teaching contained in the ritual-part of *Veda* is opposed to that contained in the knowledge-part of the *Veda*, and that what is taught in the *Veda* is therefore confusing, is untenable. Maṇḍana says that the import of *śruti* as a whole is in non-difference. *Śruti* teaches that the ultimate reality is non-dual. When there is conflict between the evidences of *śruti* and perception with regard to the nature of the ultimate reality, the authority of *śruti* alone will hold good.<sup>36</sup>

## 4

The role of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* may be explained in accordance with the technique of superimposition (*adhyāropa*)

36. *Ibid.*, p.44.

and negation (*apavāda*) which Advaita adopts in setting forth the nature of Brahman. A *pramāṇa* is merely informative. It intimates what is otherwise not known (*anadhigata*);<sup>37</sup> and what is made known by it is also not contradicted (*abādhita*) subsequently.<sup>38</sup> *Śruti* fulfils these two characteristics. It conveys the knowledge of Brahman which is otherwise unknown; and Brahman, being eternal, remains unsublated. What is the nature of the information about Brahman which *śruti* conveys? Does *śruti* say that Brahman is such-and-such in the same way as we say that a tree or a cow is such-and-such?

The nature of Brahman is such that it defies any description in terms of the categories known to us. There is no object which is similar to Brahman; and so Brahman is free from *sajātīya-bheda*. Since there is nothing which is unlike it, it is free from *vi-jātīya-bheda*. Further, since Brahman does not admit of internal differentiation, it is free from *svagata-bheda*. Brahman, thus, is free from difference of all kinds. The *Upaniṣad*, therefore, speaks of it as one only without a second (*ekameva advitīyam*).<sup>39</sup> A word can denote a thing which is associated with a genus (*jāti*), or a quality (*guṇa*), or an act (*kriyā*), or a relation (*sambandha*).<sup>40</sup> Since Brahman has no class characteristic or a quality, it cannot be denoted by a word which refers to a class feature or a quality. It cannot be denoted by a word implying an act, because it is immutable. Since there is no second object to which it can be related, it cannot be denoted by a word that conveys relation. In

37. See Śaṅkara's commentary on *BU*, II, i, 20: *śruterjñāpakatvāt. na śāstraṁ padārthānanyathākartuṁ pravṛttam. kiṁ tarhi? yathābhūtānamajñātānām jñāpane.*"

38. See the definition of *pramāṇa* and *pramā* in *VP*, p. 3.

39. *CU*, VI, ii, 1.

40. See *SBGB*, XIII, 12.

view of the absence of distinguishing marks such as name, form, genus, species, etc., it cannot be described as such-and-such.<sup>41</sup> Though we cannot say by means of words what Brahman is, we can certainly say what it is not. The true nature of Brahman can be brought out by eliminating all specifications and distinctions which are associated with it due to ignorance. Hence, *śruti* suggests the *neti* method (*via Negativa*) as the only way of understanding the nature of Brahman.<sup>42</sup> We can only say that Brahman is "not this" (*neti*), "not this" (*neti*), by negating everything of it that we can think of. And this is the only definite statement (*ādeśa*) possible with regard to Brahman. The negative texts of the Upaniṣads which declare that Brahman is "neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long...without interior or exterior,"<sup>43</sup> that it is "without parts, without activity...,"<sup>44</sup> etc. have to be explained in this way.

Even the affirmative text "Brahman is real, knowledge, and infinite"<sup>45</sup> does not state what Brahman is. It cannot be taken as an attributive judgment conveying a relational sense, for Brahman is free from attributes. The way in which the three words "real", "knowledge", and "infinite" are used in co-ordinate relation, one qualifying the other, rules out the possibility of explaining the sentence in the primary sense. Knowledge, as we understand it, is neither real nor infinite. *Ākāśa*, which is real and

41. See Śaṅkara's commentary on BU, II, iii, 6: *yaśminna kaścidiśeṣo'sti nāma vā rūpaṁ vā karma vā bhedo vā jātirvā guṇo vā. taddvāreṇa hi śabdapravṛttirbhavati. na caiṣāṁ kaścidiśeṣo brahmaṇyasti. ato na nirdeṣṭuṁ śakyata idaṁ taditi."*

42. BU, II, iii, 6.

43. *Ibid.*, III, viii, 8.

44. ŚU, VI, 19.

45. TU, II, i, 1.

infinite according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, does not possess the characteristic of knowledge. Even if knowledge as leading to successful activity is said to be real, it is not infinite.<sup>46</sup> On account of the difficulty in construing the direct sense, the sentence is interpreted in the secondary sense. The things of the world are not real. They are insentient as well as finite. So the text, "Brahman is real, knowledge and infinite," conveys the sense that Brahman is different from things which are not real, which are insentient, and which are finite.

Brahman is without a second. It is not an object of knowledge. It is the very Self of the individual. It cannot, therefore, be known or spoken of in the way in which an empirical object is known or spoken of. *Śruti* which is admitted as the *pramāṇa* through which Brahman is known cannot describe it as such-and-such. From this one should not draw the conclusion that *śruti* is useless. The work of *śruti*, which is purely negative, consists in eliminating all sorts of distinctions falsely associated with Brahman-Ātman due to *avidyā*.<sup>47</sup> Maṇḍana says in a verse which is oft-quoted that *śabda* teaches the dissolution or negation of the world of plurality superimposed on Brahman.<sup>48</sup> Only through *śruti* and not through *pramāṇas* such as perception can we know that the ultimate reality is one only without a second, and that there is no plurality whatsoever. A person realizes Brahman when, through the information obtained from *śruti*, he negates what is falsely superimposed on it.

46. See *ŚSBV*, p. 157.

47. See *ŚBSB*, I, i, 4: "avidyākalpitabhedanivṛtti-paratvāt śāstrasya."

48. *BS*, Part I, v. 3, p. 157:

"sarvapratyayavedye vā brahmarūpe vyavasthite  
prapañcasya pravilayaḥ śabdena pratipādyate."

It is necessary in this connection to refer to the ontological status of *śruti*. According to Advaita, Brahman alone is real, and everything other than Brahman is non-real or illusory (*mithyā*).<sup>49</sup> If so, *śruti* which is undoubtedly different from Brahman is illusory. That *śruti* is illusory may be brought out in a different way also. All the *pramāṇas* including *śruti* belong to, and are valid in, the empirical state (*vyavahāra-daśā*) which is due to *avidyā*; and whatever is caused by *avidyā* is *mithyā*. According to Advaita, anything which is both cognized and sublated is *mithyā*.<sup>50</sup> In so far as the things of the empirical world are cognized and also suffer contradiction at the time of Brahman-realization, they are illusory. *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa* functions only at the empirical level; and it is valid to one who is ignorant of the truth of non-duality. To one who has known the truth of non-duality, the *Vedas* are no *Vedas*.<sup>51</sup> Since duality ceases to exist when the truth of non-duality is known, a person who has known the truth is free from the notions of Scripture, teacher, taught, and so on.

## 5

If *śruti* is illusory, how can it be, the objection is raised, the source of the knowledge of the real which is Brahman?

49. See *SSBV*, p. 123 : “*brahmabhinnam hi sarvaṁ mithyā*.”

50. *Ibid.*, p. 127 : “*yasya pratītibādhāu tadeva mithyā*.” See also p. 128 : “*evaṁ paramārthabhūtabrahmapratipādakatvena paraṁ pramāṇamāpi śāstram, vyāvahāritvena āparamārthabhūtameveti*.”

51. *BU*, IV, iii, 22.

See also *SBGB*, XIII, 2. Śaṅkara says : “So, according to our view, when the *kṣetrajñas* become one with the Lord, then let *śāstra* serve no purpose. It has, however, a purpose to serve where there is *avidyā*. Just as, with the dualists of all classes, Scripture has a purpose to serve only in the state of bondage, but not in the state of liberation, so with us also.”

In order to answer this objection it is necessary to keep apart two issues which are involved here. One issue relates to the claim of *śruti* to be a *pramāṇa*, and the other to its ontological status. What is said about its ontological status does not in any way affect its status as a *pramāṇa*. Since there are two aspects to be considered with regard to *śruti*, Advaita employs two different criteria—one with regard to the claim of *śruti* to be a *pramāṇa* and the other with regard to its ontological status.

The distinctive cause of a valid cognition is a *pramāṇa*. A valid cognition (*pramā*) is one whose content remains unsublated for ever : that is to say, non-sublatability of the content is the criterion of a valid cognition.<sup>52</sup> When a person cognizes the object in front which is only a rope as a snake, his cognition is not a valid one, because snake which is the content of his cognition is contradicted by the subsequent cognition. The cognition of a lion in dream is not valid, because it also suffers contradiction when the person wakes up. While the dream-lion and the rope-snake suffer contradiction, Brahman which is the content of the cognition produced by *śruti* remains unsublated. Since Brahman is eternal, there is no possibility of its sublation at a later time. So the cognition of Brahman which *śruti* gives rise to is valid; and by virtue of causing a valid cognition, *śruti* is a *pramāṇa*. Instances which show how what is non-real gives rise to valid cognition, i.e. knowledge of what is real, are not wanting. The figure of a snake drawn on a paper is not a real snake ; nevertheless from the perception of a paper-snake one can get the knowledge of the real snake. The cognition of a rope-snake which is non-real gives rise to what is real such as fear, trembling, perspiration, loss of speech, and so on in the person who claims to have seen it. Likewise, *śruti* which is non-real gives rise to the valid cognition of Brahman. It may be stated here that, strictly speaking,

52. *ŚŚBV*, p. 123 : “*abādhitārthaviṣayaṁ jñānaṁ hi pramā.*”

perception, inference, etc. cannot be called *pramāṇas*, for the content of the cognition produced by them, being empirically real, gets sublated at the time of Brahman-realization. Every one of them is a pseudo-*pramāṇa* (*pramāṇa-ābhāsa*). However, considering that the objects made known by them under normal conditions remain unsublated as long as the empirical state lasts, the status of *pramāṇa* is accorded to all of them. By comparison with them, *śruti*, i.e. the *Vedānta-śāstra*, is characterized as the supreme *pramāṇa*.<sup>53</sup>

It is necessary in this connection to refer to an objection which is quite often raised that the Advaita position with regard to the testimony of *śruti* and other sources of knowledge involves the fallacy of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*), for the untenability of the cognition of difference is argued on the ground that *śruti* teaches the truth of non-duality, and the truth of non-duality which is supposed to be the purport of *śruti* is argued on the ground that perception of plurality is defective.<sup>54</sup> This argument is untenable. The position of Advaita here is not vitiated by the fallacy of mutual dependence, for, according to Advaita, the truth of non-duality and the illusoriness of plurality which is due to *avidyā* are known from *śruti* itself. Consider the following texts. The *Chāndogya* says that Being, the ultimate reality, is "one only, without a second,"<sup>55</sup> and that "it is real."<sup>56</sup> The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* declares, "Everything else but this (Brahman) is perishable."<sup>57</sup> Since whatever is perishable is illusory, the world of

53. *Ibid.*, p. 123: "evaṃ pramājanakatvādeva śāstraṃ mithyābhūtamāpi pramāṇamityucyate. cakṣurādīni tu etat pramājanakāni na bhavanīti apramāṇānyeva. yadyapevaṃ, tathāpi yāvadvyaḥāram-abādhitarthaviṣaya jñānajanakatvāt tānyāpi pramāṇānityucyante."

54. See Rāmānuja, *Sribhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

55. *CU*, VI, ii, 1.

56. *Ibid.*, VI, viii, 7.

57. *BU*, III, iv, 2.



plurality which is perishable is illusory. That the cognition of plurality is due to *māyā* or *avidyā* is stated in the following text of the same *Upaniṣad*, "The Lord, on account of *māyā*, is perceived as manifold."<sup>58</sup> The *Upaniṣad* says in another place, "There is no plurality whatsoever in it."<sup>59</sup> So Advaita takes its stand on the unquestionable authority of *śruti*, which is impersonal, both with regard to its teaching that reality is non-dual, and that plurality, which is sought to be justified on the basis of perception and other *pramāṇas* which are dependent on the human agency, is illusory.

Though *śruti* is a *pramāṇa*, its ontological status cannot be anything but non-real (*mithyā*) as stated earlier. The cognition which it gives rise to, though valid, is also non-real. The reason for this is not far to seek. Anything that is produced is non-real; the cognition which has Brahman for its content is produced by *śruti*; and so it is non-real. Just as *śruti*, which is non-real, is a *pramāṇa*, even so the cognition which it produces, though non-real, is none the less valid. Since "real" (*satyam*) and "non-real" (*mithyā*) are related as contradictories, *śruti* which is non-real cannot at the same time be real; but it can be a *pramāṇa*, for its role as a *pramāṇa* and its non-real status are not mutually exclusive. In the same way, since error (*bhrama*) and valid cognition (*pramā*) are related as contradictories, the valid cognition produced by *śruti* cannot at the same time be erroneous; but it can be non-real, because the non-real status of cognition and its validity are not mutually exclusive. There is nothing queer about the position of Advaita here, for it only says that the non-real *śruti* is the cause of the non-real cognition.<sup>60</sup> If the latter is admitted to be valid, it is for a different reason.

58. *Ibid.*, II, v, 19.

59. *Ibid.*, IV, iv, 19.

60. *ŚŚBV*, p. 123: "mithyābhūtaṁ śāstraṁ mithyābhūtameva pramā-jñānaṁ janayatīti na kaściddoṣaḥ."

The empirical state (*vyavahāra-daśā*), which involves distinctions such as subject and object, Scripture and its teaching, teacher and taught, is due to *avidyā*. It is, therefore, characterized as the state of ignorance. All the *pramāṇas*, being only empirically real, are founded on, and conditioned by, *avidyā*. Though there is parity in this regard among all the sources of knowledge, there is a speciality in *śruti* which not only serves to distinguish it from perception and other sources of knowledge, but also contributes to its unquestionable status. *Śruti* is impersonal (*apauruṣeya*) ; consequently it is free from non-apprehension, mis-apprehension, and other defects which arise because of the human agency. But this cannot be claimed for perception and other sources of knowledge which are dependent on the person (*puruṣa-tantra*). That the evidence of these sources of knowledge is vitiated by the defect in the person is well-known.<sup>61</sup>

61. *Ibid.*, p. 124: “*avidyājanyatvānśe samepi apauruṣeyatva-pauruṣeyatvapranyukta-nir-doṣatva-sa-doṣatvābhyām bhedāditi.*”

## CHAPTER II

### THEORIES OF ERROR

#### 1

Advaita upholds the theory of self-validity of knowledge (*svataḥ-prāmāṇya-vāda*). According to this theory, validity is intrinsic to knowledge both in respect of its origin and ascertainment. A *pramāṇa* which gives rise to knowledge also accounts for its validity and no extraneous factor is necessary in order to make it valid. A cognition even as it arises is presumably valid or true, and we act on the supposition that it is true. It means that a cognition is known or ascertained to be valid even as it arises from a *pramāṇa* which is its direct cause. When other factors such as a defect in the visual sense or absence of light interfere with the work of the *pramāṇa*, the resulting cognition becomes invalid. So, while validity is intrinsic to knowledge, invalidity is extrinsic to it. The invalidity of a cognition is known only when it is contradicted by subsequent experience. So long as a cognition is not sublated, it is presumed to be valid. A *pramāṇa* is the source of valid cognition (*pramā*); and a valid cognition is one whose content remains unsublated.<sup>1</sup> An erroneous cognition (*apramā* or *bhrama*) is one whose content is contradicted by a subsequent cognition. A person sees a rope which is in front as a snake. His cognition of snake is falsified by subsequent experience when he sees it as a rope. The subsequent cognition that the object in front is not a snake,

1. *abādhitārthaviṣayakajñānavam pramātvam.*

but only a rope, sublates the earlier cognition of snake. Thus, while there is no sublation (*bādhā*) to the content of a valid cognition, there is sublation to the content of an erroneous cognition.

The problem of error is one of the controversial issues discussed at great length by all the schools of Indian philosophy. Several issues are involved in this problem. Is it necessary first of all to accept erroneous cognition as such which is different from a valid cognition? If it is admitted that there is erroneous cognition, what is the ontological status of the content of the erroneous cognition? There is, moreover, the question about the root cause of error. These are the issues to be considered in the analysis of the problem of error.

A few preliminary observations may be made with a view to clarify the nature of the problem with which we are concerned here. When a person cognizes a rope as a snake or a piece of shell as silver, he commits perceptual error. So the first point to be noted is that we are concerned here only with perceptual error. Secondly, erroneous cognition has an objective reference. It points to an object, *e.g.* a snake or silver, which a person claims to see, though the object in front is only a rope or shell. Thirdly, the object is directly cognized as something which exists then and there. The cognition of the object is thus characterised by immediacy. Fourthly, the cognition of the object is followed by a correction through the sublating cognition (*bādhaka-jñāna*). Though the object is seen at first as silver, subsequently it is seen in its true nature as shell. The cognition of shell which arises subsequently sublates the earlier cognition of silver; and so it is called the sublating cognition (*bādhaka-jñāna*). The explanation of the problem of error to be satisfactory must take into account the points mentioned above.

## 2

The first issue which we have to discuss is whether there is erroneous cognition or not. According to the Prābhākaras, a cognition may be less than true, but it can never be untrue.<sup>2</sup> The Prābhākaras who recognize only a twofold classification of cognition into valid cognition and memory do not admit erroneous cognition as such forming a class by itself. As an Advaitin, Maṇḍana is interested in showing that there is erroneous cognition (*viparyaya-jñāna*), and so he joins issue with the Prābhākaras. He examines at great length the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti*.<sup>3</sup>

The Prābhākaras argue that the so-called erroneous cognition is not one unit, but a composite of two cognitions. Consider the case of a person who sees a piece of nacre which is in front of him, but cognizes it as silver. He gives expression to his cognition by saying, "This is silver." Here there are two cognitions, one cognition being the perception of nacre in a general way as "this" (*idam*) and not as possessing the distinctive feature of nacreeness, and the other cognition being the recollection of silver cognized elsewhere. Though silver here is the object of recollection (*smṛti*), the person does not know it to be such, because silver is thought of merely as silver stripped of its association with the past time and the particular place where it was seen. Owing to the similarity, e.g. brightness, whiteness, etc., between nacre and silver, when there is the cognition of nacre in a general way as "this", the latent impressions relating to silver which has been previously cognized are revived in the form of recollection. The cognition of the object in front and the recollection of silver are both of them true. The so-called error, according to the Prābhākaras, arises due to *akhyāti* or

2. According to the Prābhākaras, *yathārtham sarva vijñānam*.

3. The earlier Sāṅkhya view of error is similar to the Prābhākara view of error.

non-apprehension of the difference between the given and the remembered elements; and this non-apprehension is due to the fact that the object in front is cognized in a general way as a bright and white one without its specific nature, and that silver is recollected robbed of its "thatness" (*pramuṣṭa-tattākasmaraṇa*) due to the obscuration of memory (*smṛti-pramoṣa*). Had there been completeness either in respect of the perception of nacre or the recollection of silver, the so-called error, the Prābhākaras contend, would not have taken place at all.<sup>4</sup>

The Prābhākaras give a similar explanation to show why a jaundiced person perceives a conch as yellow. Unlike the previous case, both the cognitions involved here are perceptual. There is visual perception of the conch *minus* its true colour, *viz* whiteness; and there is the visual perception of the yellow colour of the bilious matter which causes jaundice, without however noticing the relation of the yellow colour to the bilious substance. So there are two cognitions which are perceptual; and each of them in its own way is incomplete. When they quickly succeed each other, the person concerned fails to notice that there are two cognitions, and loses sight of the fact that the substance, *viz* conch, and the quality, *viz* the yellowness of the bilious matter, stand apart unrelated.

Thus in the so-called cases of error two cognitions—either a perception and a recollection, or two perceptions—arise; their distinction is missed; and also the difference between objects is not noticed for the time being. The Prābhākaras, therefore, hold the view that the so-called error is only partial or incomplete knowledge. Because of the incompleteness of cognitions whose difference is not

noticed, there arises what is called error which is only a case of omission and not of commission.<sup>5</sup>

The Prābhākara explanation of error in terms of *akhyāti* is not satisfactory for several reasons. We know that a piece of stone is seldom picked up as silver by a person who wants it so long as it is not cognized as silver. In the same way, if a person does not cognize the nacre which is in front of him as silver, he will not pick it up. But in so far as he does so, it must be admitted that he has *mistaken* nacre for silver. It means that error is wrong cognition in the positive sense and not just non-apprehension in the negative sense.

It is no argument to say that silver which is remembered by the person at that time is the object which he wants to pick up. If he then remembers silver which he has cognized elsewhere, he must go to that place where it was seen by him earlier with a view to obtaining it, and he should not seize the object (nacre) which is before him as silver. The position, however, is that he picks up the nacre which is in front of him as silver, and this only confirms the view that he has mistaken nacre for silver. If so, there is erroneous cognition.<sup>6</sup>

The Prābhākaras argue that, though silver is the object of memory, the memory of the person at that time is not complete, for he does not remember the particular time and the place where silver was seen. Silver which is the object of memory is thought of merely as silver ; and so the person

5. See S. Kuppaswamy Sastri, *A Primer of Indian Logic*, pp. 125-126: "...according to the Prābhākaras, to experience is to experience validly and to err in experience is to experience imperfectly, though validly, the imperfection consisting merely in non-discrimination and not in mis-apprehension."

6. *BS*, Part I, p. 137.

does not know that it is not in his proximity. Under these circumstances, so the Prābhākaras argue, he seizes nacre as silver.

This argument, says Maṇḍana, is untenable. If the recollection of silver robbed of its "thatness" is responsible for his seizing the nacre which is before him as silver, he can as well seize some other object, say a piece of stone, as silver. What holds good in the case of nacre also holds good in the case of a piece of stone. The two factors, *viz* the recollection of silver merely as silver robbed of its "thatness" and the failure to notice that it is not in proximity, which predispose him to seize the nacre as silver, are also present in the other case. So he can as well seize a piece of stone as silver instead of nacre. But no one picks up a stone as silver. The illusion of silver arises only in nacre. If a person picks up the nacre which is in front of him as silver, it only means that he mistakes it for silver, or that silver which is elsewhere is mistakenly thought of to be in front of him.<sup>7</sup>

The Prābhākaras contend that, since nacre is seen only in a general way as a bright and shining object at a time when silver is remembered without its association with the past time and the particular place where it was seen, it is picked up as silver by a person who is in need of it. The reason for this is that he has missed the distinction between the perceived and the remembered. Contrast this with his perception of another object with all its specific qualities. Even though the idea of silver is in his memory at that time, still he is able to discriminate the perceived object from the remembered. So the Prābhākaras argue that it is due to the non-apprehension of difference between the perceived and the remembered that a person seizes the nacre which is in front as silver.

7. *Ibid.*



Even this argument, says Maṇḍana, is untenable. Maṇḍana mentions the case of a piece of stone which, being far removed from a person, is not within his sight. Just as the distinction between nacre and silver is not noticed as stated by the Prābhākaras, even so in this case the person fails to notice the difference between the piece of stone which is not seen by him and the silver which he then recollects.<sup>8</sup> If the explanation of the Prābhākaras were true, he should seize the piece of stone as silver inasmuch as there is non-apprehension of the difference (*bheda-agrahaṇa*) between the two—the object in front and the remembered object. However, he does not seize it as silver. The illusion of silver arises only in nacre and not in a piece of stone. It is no argument to say that, since the object in front (*i.e.* the piece of stone) is not cognized as silver, it is not seized as silver. Even the nacre which is in front, according to the Prābhākaras, is not cognized as silver; if so, it should not be picked up as silver. But it is picked up. If the Prābhākaras are prepared to admit that nacre is cognized as silver with a view to show why it is seized as silver, it amounts to abandoning the theory of *akhyāti*, and accepting *viparīta-khyāti*. If it be said that the piece of stone referred to above is not seized as silver for the simple reason that, being not visible, it is not seen as silver, the same thing holds good in the case of nacre; for nacre too, according to the Prābhākaras, is not seen as silver. It is true that the nacre in front is seen in a general way as a white and shining object. But a person will not pick it up as silver so long as he does not cognize it as silver. Maṇḍana calls attention to the analogy that holds good between the two cases. Just as the piece of stone is not seen as silver, even so the nacre which is in front is not seen as silver. Just as one does not try to seize the former as silver,

8. *Ibid.*

even so one should not try to seize the latter as silver. It is true that while the object in the one case is not perceived, in the other it is perceived. But this distinction does not matter at all. Maṇḍana argues that the analogy is apt in respect of the non-apprehension of difference (*bheda-agrahaṇa*) which alone, according to the Prābhākara, is responsible for the so-called error.<sup>9</sup> Non-apprehension of difference, i.e. *bheda-agrahaṇa*, is *prāgabhāva* which being *anādi* exists of its own accord. Non-apprehension of difference exists as much between the piece of stone which is not seen and the silver which is remembered, as it exists between the nacre which is seen only in a general way and the silver which is remembered. It is wrong to say that *bheda-agrahaṇa* is possible only when the object which is seen in a general way is not discriminated from what is remembered. Sense-object relation leading to the perception of the object is not at all required for the purpose of *bheda-agrahaṇa*.<sup>10</sup> Irrespective of the sense-object contact, there can be non-apprehension of difference between the nacre which is perceived only as "this" and the remembered silver, as well as between the unperceived piece of stone and the remembered silver. If so, a person should seize even a piece of stone as silver. But this is not borne out by experience. Only the nacre which is in front is picked up as silver; and this will be intelligible and tenable only if the nacre is wrongly seen as silver. If one object is wrongly

9. BS, Part I, p. 138 : "*drśyamāna-adṛśyamānayoḥ samprayukta āsamprayuktayorvā na viśeṣaḥ, bheda-agrahaṇasya tulyatvāt.*"

10. Sense-object relation is necessary, says Maṇḍana, where one object is superimposed on another, e.g. silver on shell. The visual sense is involved in the shell-silver illusion. The shell which is the locus on which silver is falsely superimposed must be seen in a general way as "this". So sense-object relation is necessary for *viparīta-khyāti*. See BS, Part I, p. 138 and BS, Part II, pp. 272 and 273.

seen as something else, it is a case of *viparīta-khyāti* and not *akhyāti*.

Is recollection (*smṛti*) by its very nature capable of differentiating its object from what is perceived or not? If the answer is in the affirmative, the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* is untenable. If what is presented to consciousness by *smṛti* always stands apart from what is perceived, how can there be non-apprehension of difference (*bheda-agrahaṇa*) between the perceived and the remembered? In other words, the Prābhākaras are wrong when they say that due to the non-apprehension of difference between the perceived and the remembered that a person seizes nacre as silver, since *smṛti* being what it is the object which is remembered is always thought of as something other than what is perceived.

It is the very nature of recollection to present its object with reference to past experience. The idea of *smṛti* without past experience is absurd. It must, therefore, be said that *smṛti* differentiates its object from what is perceived.<sup>11</sup> However, if the Prābhākaras argue that *smṛti* is not capable of differentiating its object from what is perceived, it will lead to several difficulties for which the Prābhākaras have no satisfactory answer. If the remembered is not always discriminated from the perceived, there must be error everytime when there is such non-discrimination, and there should be no exception to this. Our experience, however, does not testify to this. Non-discrimination between the remembered and the perceived, Maṇḍana remarks, sometimes results in doubt (*saṁśaya*) and not in error. There is, for instance, an object at a fairly long distance. Its specific nature is not grasped.

11. BS, Part I, p. 141 : “*paripūrṇaiva tarhi smṛtiḥ, na tayā svaviśayasya kiñcinna grhītam; svayameva sā svaviśayaṁ dṛśyāt vivinakti.*”

It is cognized only in a general way as a tall object. When it is thus cognized, the ideas of a lamp-post and of a man are in his memory. Here there is non-discrimination between the remembered and the perceived, for *smṛti*, it is argued, does not differentiate the remembered from the perceived. In the present case, however, the non-apprehension of difference between them results in doubt (*saṁśaya*) as expressed in the judgment that the object in front is either a lamp-post or a man.<sup>12</sup> If the failure to discriminate the remembered from the perceived is a limitation characteristic of *smṛti*, it should *always* result in error, and never should it lead to doubt. But non-discrimination, as in this case, sometimes leads to doubt. And there is no explanation why it sometimes happens in this way in the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti*.

It is no explanation to say that, when only one object is remembered, there is non-discrimination between the perceived and the remembered resulting in error, and that when two objects are remembered the non-discrimination between the perceived and the remembered leads to doubt. Maṇḍana calls attention to the fact that, even when two objects are in memory at a time when the object which is in front is seen in a general way, there arises sometimes error and not doubt.<sup>13</sup> This only shows that the explanation offered by the Prābhākaras is not satisfactory.

Error arises on account of the defect (*doṣa*) in the sense organ and other contributory factors, and not on account of the non-apprehension of difference between what is perceived and what is remembered. Defect is many-sided, and the error which it gives rise to is not restricted to one particular form. If nacre is cognized as silver, it is due to

12. *BS*, Part II, p. 273.

13. *BS*, Part I, p. 139.

the defect (*doṣa*) such as ignorance (*avidyā*), similarity between the two objects, etc. The object in front may be cognized in a general way, and two objects, *viz* a lamp-post and a man, may be recollected at that time; but still error may arise, one of the two objects which are remembered becoming predominant due to the peculiar nature of the defect. It may also be the case that, when the object in front is cognized in a general way, only one object is remembered. In a situation of this type, though doubt cannot arise, error may or may not take place. If there is defect, error will arise; and if there is no defect, it will not take place at all: that is, we simply ignore the object which we see in a general way, even though something is remembered at that time.<sup>14</sup>

It may be argued that the remembered object (silver) which is not in proximity is thought of to be in proximity, and that as a result of this there arises non-discrimination. But this, says Maṇḍana, will lend support to *viparīta-khyāti*, for it is a case of cognizing the object in front which is not silver as silver. If it be said that the *failure* to apprehend the remembered object as not being in proximity brings about non-discrimination, it is incumbent upon the Prābhākaras to show how this failure takes place. They could attribute this to a defect in the mind (*manodoṣa*), as this is the only explanation available to them. But this explanation, Maṇḍana argues, is totally inapplicable here. In the case of dream experience it could be said that because of the defect in the mind, there is the failure to know that the objects which are experienced in that state are not in proximity. The error (*bhrama*) we are dealing with here is one which is caused by the sense organ in the waking state. So far as the mind is concerned, it is in a perfect condition, and is not incapacitated by any defect.<sup>15</sup> The object in

14. *Ibid.*

15. *BS*, Part I, p. 142. See also *BS*, Part II, p. 277.

front is cognized as other than what it is because of the defect in the sense organ and other factors. If what the Prābhākaras say were true, this error should not arise at all, for the mind is not overwhelmed by any defect. But it does take place, and so the explanation given in terms of the defect in the mind is untenable.

There are also other difficulties in the theory of the Prābhākaras. That there is only one moon is well-known to us. A person who suffers from *timira-doṣa* sees double moon, even though the idea that there is only one moon is very firm in his memory. If error is nothing but the failure to discriminate the remembered from the perceived as argued by the Prābhākaras, the error of the double moon should not take place at all. What is remembered being the oneness of the moon, the non-discrimination between the perceived and the remembered should not lead to the erroneous cognition of double moon.<sup>16</sup> That such an error takes place cannot, however, be denied. It only means that error is different from non-discrimination.

Maṇḍana brings out the untenability of the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* yet in another way. A person who wants to drink water takes a tumbler and finds inside it a white, bright piece (shell). It is the idea of water that is in his mind. Since silver is not recollected by him at that time, non-discrimination between the two, i.e. silver and shell, is ruled out, and hence the shell inside the tumbler should not be mistaken for silver. However, such a mistake takes place. If any error should arise at all in the present case, it should be the erroneous cognition of water, for it is water which is remembered, and the person fails to notice the difference between the remembered and the perceived.<sup>17</sup>

16. *BS*, Part I, pp. 139-140.

17. *Ibid.*

The explanation given by the Prābhākaras to show why a conch which is white is seen as yellow by a jaundiced person is equally untenable. The Prābhākaras argue that in this case two imperfect perceptions arise, the one being the visual perception of the conch *minus* its real colour, and the other being the visual perception of the yellow colour of the bilious matter (*pittadravya-pītimā*) which causes jaundice, the relation of the yellow colour to the bilious substance being missed. This argument proceeds on the assumption that the bilious matter which is in the eye (*netragatam*) can be seen. Objects which are outside the eye can be seen; but there can be no visual perception of that which is in the eye. Just as the dark part of the eye (*kṛṣṇīmā*) cannot be directly seen by the eye in the same way as an object which is outside can be seen by it, even so the yellow colour of the bilious matter cannot be seen by the eye, for the bilious matter, like the dark part of the eye, is in the eye (*netras-tham*).<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Prābhākara explanation is rendered fallacious by the underlying assumption that the bilious matter in the eye can be seen.

Erroneous cognition, we said, has an objective reference, and also the object is cognized as something immediate. Only an object which is immediate to a person can be seen by him, and not one which is elsewhere. The behaviour of a person who is involved in the erroneous cognitive situation can be accounted for only on the basis of his mistaking one object for another, and not on the basis of non-apprehension of difference between two objects. Objections so far raised against the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* bring out its inadequacy in the context of the nature of the problem stated above. The theory of *akhyāti* may now be considered from the point of view of the sublating cognition (*bādhaka-jñāna*).

18. BS, Part I, p. 140.

Unlike a valid cognition, erroneous cognition suffers contradiction by later experience. The Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* cannot intelligibly account for the sublating cognition and its work. A person cognizes the nacre which is in front of him as silver and says: "This is silver." Subsequently he realizes that it is not silver, but only nacre. His subsequent cognition, "This is not silver," is termed the sublating cognition. So far as the work of negation is concerned, there are two points to be noted. First of all, negation presupposes affirmation. Secondly, if what is affirmed is true, it cannot be denied. In other words, what alone is obtained as an object of erroneous cognition can be denied. When there is the sublating cognition to the effect "This is not silver", the implication is that the silverness which is denied of the "this" should have been previously predicated of it. Only if the "this" which is in front is cognized as silver, there can be negation subsequently to the effect that it is not silver. The difficulty with the theory of *akhyāti* is how, if its explanation of what is known as erroneous cognition were true, the sublating cognition can arise at all. The Prābhākaras say that there is no mis-apprehension of what is given as something else, but there is only non-apprehension of difference between two objects: there is, that is to say, non-discrimination between two cognitions and the objects presented by these two cognitions. The explanation of error in terms of non-discrimination (*viveka-agrahaṇa*) is the main source of difficulty for the Prābhākaras. Non-discrimination is *abhāva*; it is the absence of discrimination (*viveka-grahaṇa-abhāva*) which cannot claim anything for its content. Apprehension (*grahaṇa*) has a content. But non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) can claim no content; it cannot reveal anything, because it is *abhāva*.<sup>19</sup> If, as the Prābhākaras say, there is but non-apprehension of difference at the time

19. BS, Part I, p. 143: "na khalu' agrahaṇam kaśyacit' prasañ-jakam; abhāvo hi saḥ."



of shell-silver cognition, there is no content which is apprehended at all, for non-apprehension cannot claim anything for its content. And if there is no content apprehended at that time, there should be no sublating cognition later on. The cognition of the object in front as silver, however, suffers contradiction to the effect that it is not silver. So the sublating cognition that takes place remains unexplained in the theory of *akhyāti*. This difficulty does not arise in the case of *viparīta-khyāti* according to which the object in front is wrongly cognized as something else. Unlike non-apprehension, mis-apprehension has a content, though the content suffers contradiction later on; and the mis-apprehension is corrected by the sublating cognition.<sup>20</sup>

The Prābhākaras in their explanation of error in terms of non-discrimination refer to two cognitions, each of which has a content. For example, the nacre which is in front is perceived as a generic "this", and silver, according to them, is the object of recollection. So each of these two cognitions, perception and memory, has a content. The difficulty, however, is that the objects presented by them are not sublated by the subsequent cognition. The correction that follows is not in respect of the "this" which is in front. Nor does it involve the rejection of "silver" as such. But it is in respect of the silverness of the "this" which is in front.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the sublating cognition denies that the silver is in front. If what is denied is the silverness of the "this" or the here-and-now-feature of silver, there should have been a prior cognition that the object in front is silver, or that silver is in front. Since the Prābhākaras do not accept this point, they cannot account for the sublating cognition.

20. *BS*, Part I, p. 143.

21. *Ibid.*

The Prābhākaras cannot argue that what is rejected by the sublating cognition is the prior non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*), as such a view results in absurdity. Maṇḍana drives home the point by considering the nature of cognition in general. Any cognition (*jñāna*) as it takes place removes the prior non-apprehension ; and it does not take place without doing this work. The apprehension of a pot is *ipso facto* the removal of its non-apprehension. This is the very nature of cognition. If the cognition, "This is not silver," removes the prior non-apprehension as argued by the Prābhākaras, even so is it the case with regard to every other cognition.<sup>22</sup> The Prābhākaras claim that the cognition, "This is not silver," which removes the earlier non-apprehension is the sublating cognition (*pratiṣedhadhīḥ*). If so, by the same logic even the cognition of a pot, which removes the prior non-apprehension, should be treated as the sublating cognition. Further, if both of them are sublating cognitions, the cognition of a pot should be in the form, "This is not a pot," just as the cognition in the other case is in the form, "This is not silver." The Prābhākaras dare not draw these conclusions as they are palpably absurd, even though the consistent application of the view that the sublating cognition negates the prior non-apprehension would compel them to accept such absurdities. The only way to avoid them is to explain a cognition that takes place as it is without twisting and torturing it. The cognition, "This is not silver," which follows the earlier cognition "This is silver" shows that the "this" which is in front is not silver. Any other interpretation in the context is not warranted.

Finding that only if the subsequent cognition is interpreted as the sublating cognition the difficulties stated above arise, the Prābhākaras may argue that what is called the sublating cognition is just a cognition which causes

discrimination (*viveka-jñāna*). What is lacking originally is discrimination between two cognitions and the objects thereof. There is, for instance, non-discrimination between the perceived nacre and the remembered silver; and the deficiency has been made good by the cognition, "This is not silver," which arises subsequently, for it causes the discrimination between the perceived and the remembered. So the subsequent cognition, in so far as it brings about discrimination which was originally wanting, must be treated, according to this argument, as discriminating cognition (*viveka-jñāna*) and not as sublating cognition (*bādhaka-jñāna*).

This argument, says Maṇḍana, cannot stand examination. If it is a cognition which causes discrimination, it should assume a form different from the one which it assumes. To start with, there is, let us say, non-discrimination between nacre and silver. If subsequently both of them are seen so vividly at the same time that the one can be discriminated from the other, the cognition which causes such discrimination should find expression in the judgment "These are nacre and silver." If, on the other hand, they are seen vividly, but one after another, the discrimination that arises should find expression in two judgments, "This is nacre," and "That is silver." It is in one of these two ways that the discriminating cognition should take place if the contention of the Prābhākaras were true. However, it finds expression in the judgment, "This is not silver." It means (1) that the silver is first cognized as identical with the "this" which is in front, (2) that the cognition of silver suffers contradiction subsequently, and (3) that the correction involving contradiction is expressed by the judgment, "This is, not silver." The contention that the subsequent cognition does the work of discrimination and not of sublation is, therefore, wrong.<sup>28</sup>

It is necessary, according to Maṇḍana, to note the distinction between a discriminating cognition and a sublating cognition. Consider the following case. A person cognizes the nacre which is in front of him in a general way. He has also the idea of silver in his memory at that time. At first he is not able to discriminate the object which is before him from silver, since his vision is not clear. Nevertheless, he does not mis-apprehend it as silver. Subsequently, his vision becoming clear, he is able to cognize the object with its specific nature, and say that it is nacre. In the first stage, when he cognizes the object in front as "this," even though there is silver-image in his memory, there is no mis-apprehension (*viparyaya*). Nor has he doubt (*saṁśaya*) whether the object is either this or that at that time. He has also no discriminating cognition (*viveka-jñāna*) then. When subsequently he is able to see the object clearly, he says that it is nacre. So his cognition of it as nacre in the second stage is what we call *viveka-jñāna*. It finds expression in the judgment, "This is nacre." It is not a sublating cognition, because it does not contain any negation. It only affirms the nacreeness of the "this." This cognition is such that it is entirely different from a sublating cognition which, for example, assumes the form, "This is not silver," in the context of shell-silver illusion. While the former is *viveka-jñāna*, the latter is *bādhaka-jñāna*.

Maṇḍana makes it clear that non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) of difference between the perceived and the remembered cannot lead to error for the simple reason that it is negative (*abhāva*); and what is negative cannot be the cause of anything. On the contrary, the cognition of the elsewhere and elsethen silver as here-and-now is the cause of error, because it is something positive; and what is positive alone can play the role of a cause. Maṇḍana argues that so long as the Prābhākaras refuse to accept that in error one object is mistaken for something else they cannot account for error. In the place of mis-apprehension (*viparīta-khyāti*) the

Prābhākaras bring in non-apprehension of difference between two cognitions and the objects thereof; and what is called error comes to be characterized as imperfect experience, the imperfection consisting in non-discrimination (*agrahaṇa*). If non-discrimination is in their vocabulary a synonym for error, what is the cause of non-discrimination? They cannot give any answer excepting that non-discrimination is responsible for the failure to distinguish one object from the other. It amounts to saying that non-discrimination is the cause of non-discrimination.<sup>24</sup> It is, remarks Maṇḍana, just an exercise in words. One and the same cognition cannot be the effect as well as its own cause.<sup>25</sup> It is this predicament that emerges from the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti*.

Further, the Prābhākara theory of *akhyāti* breaks down when it is applied to dream experience. In dream experience there is the erroneous cognition of objects which are not really present. Error, according to the Prābhākaras, is due to the non-apprehension of difference between the perceived and the remembered. In dream experience, however, such a non-discrimination cannot arise at all, since there is no second object which is perceived other than what is remembered. So it has to be said that on their own account there is no erroneous cognition in dream experience, a conclusion which is palpably untrue.<sup>26</sup>

The Prābhākaras try to overcome the difficulty mentioned above in terms of their own theory of dream.

24. *BS*, Part I, p. 144. Also see *BS*, Part II, p. 280: “*kiṃca viparyayasya viparītakhyāteḥ anabhyūpagame, vivekāgraha eva bhramaḥ; so'grahanibandhana iti bruvāṇena agraho'grahanibandhana uktāḥ syāt.*”

25. *BS*, Part I, p. 143: “*śabdaikagamyā uktāḥ syādagraho'grahanibandhanaḥ.*”

26. *BS*, Part I, p. 144.

Dream, the Prābhākara say, is memory without the consciousness at that time that it is so. Memory (*smṛti*) is a peculiar cognition. Its peculiarity consists in the fact that, unlike the ordinary perceptual cognition, it is the representative cognition of the already cognized (*grhītagrahaṇam*). Whereas in the case of perceptual cognition the visual sense comes into contact with the external object, in the case of memory, the object is only represented in consciousness as a memory-image. Memory, thus, is the cognition of the previously cognized by representation. Dream is memory in that objects already cognized are recollected in it. However, there is no awareness at that time that the dream objects are but memory - images; and this is due to the defect of the mind. As a result of this defect, objects which are only recollected are thought of to be really in front by the person concerned. When the dream experience is over, there is the realization that dream is but memory, and that dream objects are but objects of recollection without, however, any awareness at that time of their *representative* character. In this explanation of dream there is no place for *anyathā-khyāti*, for there is *omission* of some relevant part of what is recalled in dream experience. In dream there is error (*bhrama*), not because of seeing one object as something else, but because of seeing what is representative as presentative, which is a case of omission. The omission is made good and the lost element is restored in waking experience which follows dream.

The Prābhākara explanation of dream is untenable. The basic question to be considered here is whether a cognition becomes erroneous just because there is a failure to note a relevant characteristic of the object apprehended. Are we justified in saying that dream experience is erroneous on the ground that objects cognized therein are grasped incompletely, the incompleteness consisting merely in the omission to note the "recollectedness" which is a relevant characteristic of them? The answer is in the negative.

Maṇḍana gives an example in order to drive home the objection against the Prābhākara position. When we see a person from a fairly long distance, we just cognize him as a person without noting his complexion and other characteristics which he possesses. It is distance which prevents us from noting all these specific features. Coming closer to him, we see him with all these features. At first our cognition of the person is incomplete. In the second stage, the incompleteness of the earlier cognition has been made good. Commonsense tells us that the earlier cognition of the person merely as a person without the relevant features which he has is not illusory. Nor is it correct to say that the earlier cognition stands corrected by the subsequent cognition. If, as the Prābhākaras say, the cognition of objects in dream is illusory just because there is a failure to note the *representative* character of the objects seen therein, it should be said in the interests of consistency that the cognition of the person merely as a person without the special features he possesses is illusory. One can vote for this conclusion only by flying in the face of commonsense. The Prābhākara explanation of dream is totally untenable.<sup>27</sup>

## 3

If error is not non-apprehension (*akhyāti*) of difference between two cognitions and the objects thereof, but mis-apprehension of one object as another, how does it take place? While the Naiyāyikas explain error in terms of *anyathā-khyāti*, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas explain it in terms of *viparīta-khyāti*. There is substantial agreement between these two schools of thinkers in the explanation of error, though undoubtedly there are differences in matters of minor details. It is also necessary to bear in mind in this connection that though Maṇḍana in the course of his

27. *Ibid.* Also see BS, Part II, p. 281.

criticism of the theory of *akhyāti* argues for the acceptance of *viparīta-khyāti*, his explanation of error as *viparīta-khyāti* should not be confused with the theory of the Bhāṭṭas. For Maṇḍana there is *viparīta-khyāti* in the sense that one object is mistaken for something else. The object of erroneous cognition is, however, *anirvacanīya*, i.e. what is different from both *sat* and *asat*.<sup>28</sup> Unlike the Prābhākaras, the Naiyāyikas and the Bhāṭṭas hold the view that error is perceptual cognition of an object as other than what it is (*anyathā*) or as contrary to what it is (*viparīta*). So the problem of error, according to them, is perceptual. Further, they also admit that erroneous cognition points to an object outside it. Though the object in front is shell, it is nevertheless seen as silver. It means that the object of erroneous cognition, according to them, is immediate. Moreover, according to both the Naiyāyikas and the Bhāṭṭas, there is no cognition of the non-existent (*asat*). What is existent (*sat*) alone can be cognized and not what is non-existent.

Cognition by its very nature is object oriented. What a cognition is, is determined by the object (*jñeyādhiṇam jñānam*). How is it, then, that though shell is the object in front, the cognition which takes place has silver for its object? The Naiyāyikas argue that the object in front is cognized in a general way as "this" through normal visual perception (*laukika-sannikarṣa*); and owing to the extra-normal sense relation (*alaukika-sannikarṣa*) with the silver which is elsewhere, the silverness of the silver is associated with the "this" which is in front. Consequently

28. *Viparīta-khyāti*, according to Maṇḍana, is a case of superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of one thing on another. *Adhyāsa* is *atasmin tadbuddhiḥ*. "Bhramajñānaviṣayibhūtamithyāvastu, tadviṣayaka-bhrāntijñānam ca adhyāsa ityucyate." (*Vicārasāgara*, p. 44)



there is the unitary cognition, "This is silver." The point to be noted here is that, according to the Naiyāyikas, the "this" representing the object in front is existent (*sat*). Silver also is existent (*sat*), though elsewhere. Since the elsewhere existent silver is seen in unity with the "this" in front, there arises error.<sup>29</sup> In other words, in error there is a wrong synthesis of two objects both of which are existent. In the case of the visual perception of a conch as yellow by a person suffering from jaundice, both the conch and the yellow colour of the bilious matter are existent; and both of them are presented to the mind through normal sense relation. Here also error arises because of the wrong synthesis of the presented objects. The principle of explanation in other cases of error is the same.

Though the Bhāṭṭas do not admit that in the case of shell-silver cognition the silver which is elsewhere is seen through extra-normal sense relation, they maintain that both the shell which is in front and the silver which is elsewhere are existent. According to them, erroneous cognition reveals an existent object in the form of a different object which is also existent. Every object has qualities with which it is internally related. It is also related to other objects externally. In the case of the erroneous cognition of shell as silver, silver with which the shell in front is externally related appears to be internally related through the relation of identity (*tādātmya*).<sup>30</sup> Both the subject and the predicate of the erroneous cognition, "This is silver," are existent (*sat*). What is false (*asat*) is the relation between the "this" and the silver, the subject and

29. The word *anyathā* means *prakārāntareṇa*, *rūpāntareṇa*. "*Ekasya vastunaḥ rūpāntareṇa bhāsamānatā bhrāntiḥ*." (*Vicārasāgara*, p. 81)

30. The relation is also referred to as *samsar ga*.

the predicate of the erroneous judgment.<sup>31</sup> The false identity between the "this" which is in front and the silver which is elsewhere is due to certain defects such as imperfect conditions of visual perception, the defective contact between the visual sense and the object in front, etc. In the absence of defect, silver which is elsewhere cannot be seen in unity with the object with which the visual sense is in contact. The sublating cognition through which the error that has taken place is discovered only shows that there is no silver in front; it does not deny the existence of silver elsewhere. In other cases of error also, the same explanation holds good: the objects related such as the conch and the yellow colour, the crystal and the red colour, etc. are existent; only the relation of identity in each case is wrong with the result that there arises the erroneous cognition, "The conch is yellow," "The crystal is red," as the case may be.

Neither *anyathā-khyāti* nor *viparīta-khyāt* is tenable as an explanation of error. Though the Naiyāyikas say that the object of erroneous cognition is immediate, they do not have a satisfactory explanation to show how an object which is elsewhere is seen as if it is immediate. Their theory of extra-normal sense relation known as *jñānalakṣaṇa-pratyāsatti* does not explain the immediacy of the object of erroneous cognition satisfactorily. If an object which is far away can be seen through extra-normal sense relation, everyone would become omniscient.<sup>32</sup> The untenability

31. See Pārthasārathi's *Nyāyaratnākara* on the *Slokavārtika*, Nirālambana, 117: "tatra śūktikārojatādijñānam śūktikākhyam bhāvam śūktikārūpeṇa sadrūpam bhāvāntarasya yat sadrūpam rajatarūpam tena rūpeṇa gṛhṇad bhrāntam bhavati."

See also Pārthasārathi's *Sāstradīpikā*, p. 58: "sarvatra saṁsargamātramasadevābhabhāsate, saṁsargiṇastu santa eva; seyam viparītakhyātiriti yucyate mīmāṃsakaiḥ."

32. See Sucaritamitra's *Kāśikā* on *Slokavārtika*, 5, 2, 114: "evam hi na kaścidasarvajño bhavet."

of the Nyāya theory will be obvious if we consider the sublating cognition. The cognition, "This is silver," is followed by the cognition, "This is not silver." The claim that silver is in front at that time is falsified by the sublating cognition. Since the latter through its denial does not show silver to be connected with *some other* place and time, it is wrong to say that the elsewhere and elsewhen silver is seen as here and now.<sup>33</sup> Further, when the cognition, "This is not silver," takes place, the person concerned comes to know of the absence of silver in that place at that time. As a result of this cognition, he does not see the existence of silver elsewhere. If the elsewhere silver is cognized by the person as here and now, he should see the "elsewhere" silver as soon as the erroneous cognition is terminated by the sublating cognition, "This is not silver." But it is not so. It is, therefore, wrong to say that in the erroneous cognition of shell-silver the elsewhere existent silver is cognized as existing in front at that time.<sup>34</sup>

It does not matter which word, *anyathā* or *viparīta*, is used. The word *anyathā* means "otherwise than what it is". The word *viparīta* signifies "contrary to what it is". Both the expressions convey the sense of change. If a certain object which is in front is seen as other than what it is or contrary to what it is, it cannot be because of any change in the object at the time of cognition. The object in front, shell or rope, remains intact without undergoing any change when it is seen differently as silver or snake, as the case may be. Nor is it possible to think of change in the cognition when the object remains intact. Cognition by its very nature is object oriented and object dependent. A change in cognition apart from a change in the object is untenable. If a cognition is said to be *anyathā* or *viparīta*

33. See *Pañcapādikā*, with commentaries, pp. 66-67.

34. *Ibid.*

on the ground that it reveals the object differently, it amounts to saying that the cognition misrepresents the object. If at any time a cognition can misrepresent its object, we can never be certain, as the Prābhākaras say, about the nature of the object cognized by us; nor can we have confidence in our cognition.

The Naiyāyikas as well as the Bhāṭṭas claim that the subject and the predicate of the erroneous judgment are existent. According to them, it is the synthesis of the predicate with the subject, or the relation of identity (*tādātmya*) between the subject and the predicate, which is *asat*, that makes the cognition erroneous. This argument is untenable. What is claimed by this argument is not warranted by the sublating cognition. For example, the sublating cognition, "This is not silver," purports to deny the presence of the silver in front. It is not concerned with the relation of identity between the subject and the predicate. It does not say that there is no relation between the subject and the predicate. Its form is such that it does not show that the relation between the "this" and silver is false or *asat*.<sup>35</sup> Further, since the relata are real, the relation that obtains between them cannot be *asat*.<sup>36</sup>

There is also another difficulty. Both the Naiyāyikas and the Bhāṭṭas maintain that the subject, *i.e.* the "this" which is in front, and the predicate, *i.e.* silver, are existent or real (*sat*). The cognition that takes place in this case is in the form, "This is silver." What is the ontological status of the silver which is the object of cognition? Is silver real (*sat*) or not? If it is real, it cannot be denied. And if it cannot be denied, there is no error at all; hence it is wrong

35. See *Iṣṭasiddhi*, p. 107: "*nāpi tayoraikyaṁ bādhyam, aikyaṁ nāstīti jñānābhāvāt.*"

36. See Nṛsiṃhāśrama's commentary on the *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, I, 20.

to say that silver is the object of erroneous cognition. Inasmuch as the cognition of silver is followed by the sublating cognition, it must be admitted that silver is denied. In so far as it is denied, it cannot be real (*sat*). If so, how can it be said that silver which is the object of the erroneous cognition is real?

Three factors are there, according to the Bhāṭṭas, in an erroneous cognition—the subject, the predicate, and the relation between these two factors. Both the subject and the predicate are admitted to be real (*sat*), and they have the same ontological status. The relation between them, however, is said to be false. Why the relation alone is false and not any other factor, and what makes this relation false or unreal (*asat*), are questions for which there is no satisfactory answer in the Bhāṭṭa theory of *viparīta-khyāti*. Further, if we examine what happens to the subject and the predicate as a result of the sublating cognition, it will be apparent that the subject and the predicate supposed to be related through a false relation do not have the same ontological status. The shell which is in front is cognized in a general way as “this”. The “this” representing shell is real. Silver which is elsewhere and which is real is, let us say for the sake of argument, falsely related through identity (*tādātmya*) to the “this” in front. It is common knowledge that the sublating cognition which arises subsequently does not affect the “this” at all. The “this” which is the generic feature (*sāmānyāmśa*) of the object in front is seen at the time of error. It is, indeed, the subject of the erroneous judgment. If the object in front is not seen as the “this”, error will not arise at all. The “this” persists even when the sublating cognition takes place. Correction through the sublating cognition is not in respect of the “this,” but only with regard to silver, which is the predicate of the erroneous judgment. The sublating cognition confirms that the “this” exists in front, as it was seen earlier.

But it denies the existence of silver in front. It means that the alleged false relation between the "this" and silver does not affect them, the subject and the predicate, in the same way. In so far as silver does not continue to exist where it was seen at the time of erroneous cognition, it cannot be said to be real in the same sense in which the "this" is said to be real. In other words, the subject and the predicate of the erroneous cognition do not have the same ontological status. This is what emerges from the work of the sublating cognition. While the Advaitin admits that silver which is the object of erroneous cognition is not unreal, for the illusory silver too has a certain reality, the reality of silver is not on a par with that of shell which is seen as "this".

## 4

While the Prābhākaras, the Naiyāyikas, and the Bhāṭṭas hold the view that the object of erroneous cognition is *sat*, the Buddhists of the Mādhyamika school maintain that the object of erroneous cognition is *asat*, i.e. totally non-existent. According to the Mādhyamikas, error is cognition of a totally non-existent object as existent. The cognition of the totally non-existent silver as existent in front is a case of error. Not only is silver non-existent, but the shell in front which is supposed to be mistaken for silver is non-existent as well. What makes the non-existent object appear as existent? The Mādhyamikas answer this question by saying that the cognition which is erroneous has the power called *avidyā* to manifest the totally non-existent silver with the aid of the latent impressions (*vāsanā*) of the preceding cognition. Unlike the Bhāṭṭas who maintain that even though the relata are real the relation that obtains between them is *asat*, the Mādhyamikas deny the reality of the relata together with the relation between them; and such a view is in accordance with their metaphysical position of the voidness (*śūnyatā*) of all

existence. That the object of erroneous cognition is *asat* is borne out by the sublating cognition. On the strength of the sublating cognition, "This is not silver," the Mādhyamikas argue that the silver which is cognized must be non-existent (*asat*). They contend that what is existent cannot be denied; and in so far as silver is denied by the sublating cognition, it must be non-existent. The ontological status of a thing is either real (*sat*) or unreal (*asat*); and a third alternative, according to the Mādhyamikas, cannot be thought of.

*Asat-khyāti*, which is the name given to the Mādhyamika theory of error, is not acceptable for the following reasons. First of all, if the object of error, *e.g.* silver, is totally non-existent, it can never be perceived at all.<sup>37</sup> The person concerned claims to have immediate experience of silver. If silver is absolutely non-existent, it can never be an object of visual perception. A cognition, whether veridical or erroneous, must have a cognitum. No cognition is possible when the cognitum is non-existent. Since the person concerned has the cognition of silver, it follows that silver which is the cognitum cannot be non-existent. Further, the Mādhyamika claim that the "non-existent" is the object of erroneous cognition is, indeed, paradoxical. Since the "non-existent" is cognized, as claimed by the Mādhyamikas, then the cognitum, whatever it may be, is not non-existent (*asat*); it is not *tuccha*. Moreover, what is their explanation of *asat* as an ontological category? Is it different from *sat* or not? If the former, then it is something different from *sat*. What-is-different-from-*sat* cannot be totally non-existent. If it be said that it is not different from *sat*, then it is *sat* alone. If so, *asat* as such is not at all established.<sup>38</sup>

37. "asato bhānāyogat."

38. See *Iṣṭasiddhi*, p. 167: "sato'nyatve ca asatassadantaravat sattvaṃ, ananyatve ca sadeva nānyaditi asato'siddhirityuktam."

In order to bring out other difficulties, let us examine the Mādhyamika theory from the point of view of the relation between the cognition and the object cognized. According to the Mādhyamikas, the cognition itself due to a certain power called *avidyā* inherent in it is responsible for the appearance of what is non-existent as existent.<sup>39</sup> If so, it is necessary to know whether a non-existent object (*asat*) is produced by the cognition or revealed by it. The Mādhyamikas cannot say that the non-existent is produced by the cognition, for there is no such thing as origination or production (*utpatti*) for *asat*. Origination, existence, growth, and other modifications (*vikāra*) are possible in the case of a positive entity, i.e. something existent (*sat*); these cannot be predicated of *asat*. It is a contradiction in terms to say that what is non-existent becomes existent. Nor is it possible for the Mādhyamikas to say that the non-existent is revealed by the cognition. If the erroneous cognition through its power called *avidyā* reveals the non-existent object, there must be some other cognition of which the non-existent object becomes the content. But there is no other cognition. For example, if a lamp reveals the existence of an object, as a result of the work of manifestation which it does, there arises the cognition of the object. In the same way, if the non-existent silver is manifested by the erroneous cognition through its power of *avidyā*, then some other cognition which has the non-existent silver as its content must take place. But there is no evidence for the admission of any other cognition. Further, the Mādhyamikas have to say that the cognition concerned is admittedly existent, for it has causal efficiency (*arthakriyā*) as a result of which it either produces or reveals the non-existent object as the existent. The difficulty here is that there cannot be

39. See *Svārājyasiddhi*, p. 187: “*āntarasya vijñānasya asadbāhyārtha-prakāśana-śaktireva, adṛṣṭāntasiddha svapratyaya sāmartyāsādita-svabhāvo’vidyetyabhyupagamāt.*”



any relation between the cognition which is existent and the alleged non-existent object.<sup>40</sup>

The Mādhyamikas may argue that the relation between the cognition and the object cognized is the relation between the determined and the determinant (*nirūpya-nirūpaka-sambandha*). When there is the cognition of silver, the silver which is the cognitum determines what the cognition is. So, while the cognitum is the determinant, the cognition is the determined. Thus, the Mādhyamikas may explain the relation between the cognition and the object cognized. But this argument cannot stand examination. So long as the cognitum is non-existent and the cognition existent, there cannot be the relation of the determinant and the determined between them. The basic difficulty here is how what is non-existent can play the role of a determinant of cognition. To be a determinant (*nirūpaka*) of cognition, the cognitum must bring about some special distinguishing feature in the cognition in such a way that the cognition is determined to be such-and-such. But it is not competent to do so, since it is non-existent. If it does, it will cease to be what is non-existent. Nor is it possible for the cognition to be the determinant, and the cognitum the determined (*nirūpya*). Cognition cannot cause anything in what is non-existent. If, on the contrary, the object is existent, cognition can reveal it; and as a result of the work of manifestation done by the cognition, the object previously unknown becomes known. So the Mādhyamikas cannot explain in an intelligible way the relation between the cognition and the cognitum.<sup>41</sup>

The theory of error formulated by the Dvaita Vedāntins, which is a development of the *asat-khyāti* of the

40. *Ibid.*, p. 188: "*sadasatoḥ sambandha-ayogāt.*"

41. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Mādhyaṃikas and the *anyathā-khyāti* of the Naiyāyikas, may be discussed in this connection. The Dvaita theory of error is called *abhinava-anyathākhyāti*. The Dvaita Vedāntins accept certain points emphasized both by the Naiyāyikas and the Mādhyaṃikas in their explanation of error without, however, accepting their theories in their entirety.

In erroneous cognition the object with which the visual sense is in contact is cognized as otherwise than what it is (*anyathā*). So error, according to the Dvaitins, is *anyathā-khyāti*. When the shell which is in front is seen as silver, it is not the real silver which is elsewhere that is identified with the object in front; rather it is a totally non-existent silver which is identified through superimposition with the object in front, which is seen only in a general way. Though the Dvaitins admit the existence of real silver elsewhere, they maintain, on the strength of the sublating cognition, that what is denied is the here-and-now feature of silver and not the real silver which is elsewhere. So they do not accept the Nyāya as well as the Bhāṭṭa view that the real silver which is elsewhere is predicated of the "this" which is in front. In other words, the distinction between the silver which is superimposed on the "this" which is in front and the elsewhere-real silver which is not superimposed on the "this" is essential to the Dvaitins. The erroneous cognition of shell-silver is explained by them in the following way. A person perceives the real shell which is in front of him only in a general way as "this" due to the defect in the visual sense, absence of adequate light, and so on. The latent impressions (*saṃskāra*) of the real silver experienced earlier are aroused at that time. Consequently, he sees the "this" in front as silver, even though silver is non-existent there. According to the Dvaitins, two conditions have to be fulfilled for the occurrence of error. First of all, a substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) which is real is required. Secondly, there must be a real object similar to the object

of error for generating the mental impressions of that object through previous experience.

What, according to the Dvaitins, is the ontological status of the object of error? Like the Mādhyamikas, the Dvaitins hold the view that the object of error is totally non-existent (*atyantāsat*). In the case of shell-silver cognition, the sublating cognition, they argue, testifies to the fact that the silver cognized earlier is totally non-existent. It is further argued that, when the person concerned makes a critical review (*anusandhāna*) of his experience in the wake of the sublating cognition, he is convinced that the non-existent silver was seen by him. However the Dvaita theory of error differs from the *asat-khyāti* of the Mādhyamikas in an important respect. While the Mādhyamikas do not accept a real substratum for the purpose of accounting for error, the Dvaitins emphasize its need, for it is on the given substratum that the non-existent object is superimposed. In the erroneous judgment, "This is silver," while the subject is existent, the predicate is non-existent. Thus, according to the Dvaitins, (a) the object of error is immediate; (b) it is ontologically non-existent (*asat*); (c) though non-existent, it is nevertheless perceived; and (d) its non-existence is proved by the sublating cognition.

The Dvaita theory of error is not satisfactory. As stated earlier in the course of the criticism of the Mādhyamika theory of error, the basic difficulty is how the object of error which is said to be totally non-existent can be perceived at all. What is non-existent can never be an object of cognition; and what is cognized can never be non-existent. In the case of shell-silver illusion, inasmuch as silver is perceived, it cannot be non-existent. While we are able to perceive the horns of a cow, we are not able to perceive the horns of a man for the simple reason that they are non-existent.<sup>42</sup>

42. "na hi nari śṛṅgam bhāti gavīva."

So a non-existent object can never be an object of cognition.

It is no argument to say that, inasmuch as we speak of a non-existent object, *e.g.* man's horn, sky-flower, etc., what is non-existent can be the object of our cognition. It is true that we speak of such entities as sky-flower, which are non-existent. But the cognition here is what is known as *vikalpa-jñāna*. Cognitions of this type do not have an objective reference. The utterance of the expression "sky-flower" gives rise to a cognition corresponding to which there is no cognitum in the external world.<sup>43</sup> Whereas no one claims to see sky-flower, which is totally non-existent, in the case of erroneous cognition the person concerned claims to see the object, *e.g.* silver, in front of him. The non-existent object which falls within the scope of *vikalpa-jñāna* can never be an object of immediate perception (*aparokṣa-pratibhāsa*).<sup>44</sup> Since the shell-silver is the object of immediate apprehension, it is not on a par with non-existent entities such as sky-flower.

It may be argued by those who advocate *asat-khyāti* that, inasmuch as hare's horn which is non-existent is an object of direct perception in dream experience, what is non-existent can be directly perceived. But this argument is wrong. What is insisted on against *asat-khyāti* is that, while an object which is *mithyā* can be directly perceived, an entity said to be *asat* cannot be directly perceived. Objects such as chariots and highways, hares possessing horns, etc. seen in dream are *mithyā*. In the absence of some

43. Ānandapūrṇamuniṇdra, *Nyāyacandrikā*, p. 410: "nṛśṛṅgamapi tacchadbādhātīti cet, na, tasya vikalpamātratvāt. śabdajñānānupātī hi vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ."

44. *Ibid.*, p. 424: "nisvarūpatvaṁ hi asattvaṁ tadaparokṣakhyānā-lambanatve na syāt."

other example which will not be a case of *mithyā*, the thesis that what is *asat* can be directly perceived remains unsubstantiated.<sup>45</sup>

Further, the claim that the sublating cognition proves the non-existence of the object of error cannot be sustained. When the sublating cognition, "This is not silver," denies the silverness of the "this", it only shows that the real silver, *i.e.* the empirically established market silver, is absent in the given substratum. It is not at all an evidence to show that the totally non-existent silver was seen earlier. Further, the review (*anusandhāna*) of the whole situation by the person when he is free from error convinces him that the silver which he saw earlier was illusory or false (*mithyā*), and not non-existent (*asat*).<sup>46</sup>

There is also another difficulty. Sense-object contact, according to the Dvaitins, is necessary for the immediate perception of an object. The visual sense is in contact with the shell, the substratum, which is in front; and silver is totally non-existent in the given substratum. Since no relation between the visual sense and the non-existent silver is possible, the immediacy of the object of erroneous cognition remains unexplained in the Dvaita theory. The explanation of immediacy in terms of the latent impressions (*saṁskāra*) which are aroused at the time of the perception of the "this" in front is not satisfactory. The impressions of silver, when aroused in a given situation, may bring to consciousness silver as an object of memory; they can never account for the visual perception of the here-and-now silver.

45. *Ibid.* pp. 424-425.

46. *Ibid.* p. 410: "nedam rūpyamitiññānasya laukika-rajatābhāva-viśayatvam vakṣyate. anusandhānamapi mithyāiva rajatamabhāditi. tasmāt na asat-khyātiḥ."

The Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of error as formulated by Nāthamuni is called *yathārtha-khyāti*. Accepting *yathārtha-khyāti* as the basic position in the explanation of error, Rāmānuja, however, is inclined to interpret it in terms of his own version of *anyathā-khyāti*. Without giving up *yathārtha-khyāti*, Vedānta Deśika explains error in terms of his own version of *akhyāti*.<sup>47</sup> The Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of error is worked out on the basis of certain epistemological and metaphysical views. First of all, what exists alone is cognised ; and the object cognized is real. It means that it is inconceivable to think of a cognition in the absence of a real cognitum. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins, therefore, subscribe to *sat-khyāti*. Secondly, every cognition reveals an object as it is (*yathārtham*):<sup>48</sup> the object, that is to say, is as it is manifested by a cognition ; and there is no exception to this. Though every cognition reveals an object as it is, only that cognition whose object is practically useful will be accepted as *pramā*.<sup>49</sup> A cognition whose object cannot be put to use will be treated as erroneous, notwithstanding

47. Vedānta Deśika says that the theory of *yathārtha-khyāti* may not be intelligible to the ordinary mind. See his *Nyāyapārisuddhi*, p. 40:

“*yannāthamunimiśrādyair-yathārthakhyāti sādhanam  
tallokabuddhyanārohādvaibhavaṁ kecidūcīre*”

Rāmānuja observes in his *Śrībhāṣya*, I, i, 1, that all others who explain error have to accept after some stage the principle of *anyathā-khyāti*, viz that one object appears as something else. It must be borne in mind that by *anyathā-khyāti* Rāmānuja does not mean the Nyāya theory of *anyathā-khyāti*. Nor does the *akhyāti* of Vedānta Deśika refer to the Prābhākara theory with all its epistemological details.

48. Rāmānuja says : “*yathārtham sarvavijñānamiti vedavidāṁ matam*.” See his *Śrībhāṣya*, I, i, 1, p. 183.
49. See *Yatīndramata-dīpikā*, I, 7: “*yathāvasthita-vyavahārānugūṇa-jñānam pramā*.”

the fact that it reveals what is real. Thirdly, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins claim, on the basis of the scriptural doctrine of tripartiteness (*trivṛtkaraṇa*) or quintuplication (*pañcīkaraṇa*) of the elements, that everything participates in the nature of everything else. According to this doctrine, each gross element contains an admixture of the other elements. The process of mixing up of the three elements, earth, water and fire, mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>50</sup> is called *trivṛtkaraṇa*. If all the five elements, earth, water, fire, air, and ether, are taken into consideration, the process through which a compound of these elements is formed is called *pañcīkaraṇa*. The gross element called "earth" (*pr̥thivī*) contains earth and other elements. The same is the case with the gross element called "water". The Viśiṣṭādvaitins argue that what is true of the gross elements is also true of objects which arise from quintuplicated elements. Just as one element is in other gross elements, every object, according to them, is in everything else.<sup>51</sup> For example, in nacre there is silver; and in silver there is nacre. According to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, similarity between two objects must be due to the same substance constituting both of them. Even though there is silver in shell, the silver-components are negligible in it, while the shell-components predominate; and it is, therefore, called "shell". In what is called "silver" the shell-components are negligible, while the silver-components are preponderant. So the Viśiṣṭādvaitins hold the view that all objects are composed of the constituent parts of all objects.

When a person perceives the nacre which is in front of him as silver, he apprehends neither the non-existent silver nor the elsewhere real silver. On the contrary, he

50 VI, ii, 3-4.

51. Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, I, i, 1, pp. 184-185: "*sarve sarvatra saṅgatāḥ*," "*evam sarvasya sarvatra vyavahārayavasthitiḥ*."

sees, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins say, the real silver which is in the nacre. His visual perception of nacre as nacre is *yathārtha*. While normally he would perceive nacre as nacre, due to some defect in the eye he sees only the silver-components of nacre, which are negligible, instead of the nacre-components which preponderate. According to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, his cognition of shell-silver is erroneous not on the score that his cognition does not reveal the object as it is, but on the ground that the object of his cognition, viz silver, is not practically useful. So while the object of a valid cognition is serviceable in life, that of error is not. Rāmānuja thinks that in this explanation of error as *yathārtha-khyāti* there is the principle of *anyātha-khyāti*, because the shell-aspect of the given object which should be seen under normal circumstances is seen differently as silver. According to Vedānta Deśika, there is also non-apprehension (*akhyāti*) in such an explanation in so far as the person concerned due to defect fails to notice the difference between the two aspects of the given object, i.e. between the shell-aspect and the silver-aspect. Thus according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, in error, (a) what is real (*sat*) in front is perceived; (b) the perception of the object (e.g. shell-silver) accounts for the volitional activity; and (c) the role of the sublating cognition can be explained in terms of the perception of the preponderant aspect; the sublating cognition does not negate the object cognized, but only arrests the volitional activity.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins explain other cases of error also in terms of *yathārtha-khyāti*. When a person suffering from jaundice sees a white conch as yellow, the yellowness of the bilious matter in the eye gets actually transferred to the object in front through visual rays. So the yellow colour of the conch seen by him is real. Objects seen in dream are also real. Dream objects, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, are creations of God for the private experience of the dreamer during the time of dream experience. So in



all cases of error, the object cognized which is real, whether it exists only for the time being as in the case of a dream object or whether it exists all the time like silver in shell, is not practically useful.

The explanation of error given by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins is open to objection on several grounds. Let us first consider the case of shell-silver cognition. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins argue that, when a person sees shell as silver, it is the real silver which is in the shell that is perceived by him. The doctrine of *trivṛtkaraṇa* or *pañcīkaraṇa*, they seem to think, justifies not only their explanation of shell-silver cognition, but also their generalization that everything participates in the nature of everything else. First of all, this argument of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins is vitiated by the fallacy of level mistake. The doctrine of *trivṛtkaraṇa* or *pañcīkaraṇa* is with reference to the gross elements. It is not concerned with the objects which are products of the triplicated or quintuplicated elements.<sup>52</sup> What is true of the gross elements at the basic level is not true of objects such as shell which are at a different level altogether. The scriptural doctrine cited by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins does not prove the presence of silver in shell. Further, since shell is a product of the quintuplicated element, let it be that it contains the components of all the five elements. But it does not follow from this that it contains the components of silver.

The claim that everything is in everything else is equally untenable. Is it the case that a piece of shell contains components of shell and of silver alone? Or does it contain the components of all objects? If the former, it may be claimed that shell comprises in its being both shell and silver. If so, other objects such as gold and carbon are not present in it, i.e. other objects do not participate in the

52. See Nṛsiṃhāśrama's commentary on the *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, I, 20: "*bhūtānāmeva pañcīkṛtātvāt, bhautikānām tadabhāvāt.*"

nature of shell. If the latter, just as shell is seen as silver, it must also be seen as gold, carbon, etc., for everything, it is claimed, is in everything. There is yet another difficulty. The object called "shell", according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, is a whole consisting of shell-parts and silver-parts. While the shell-parts preponderate in it, the silver-parts, they allege, are negligible; and all these parts taken together constitute the whole which is called shell. This argument is not satisfactory. A whole is nothing but the sum total of its parts. A particular aggregate of parts which have the same nature, let us say, is called "shell". This aggregate of parts called "shell" is different from some other aggregate of parts designated differently. If so, the sum total of parts called "shell" cannot contain silver-parts, gold-parts, carbon-parts, etc. Shell can contain only shell-parts; gold can contain only gold-parts; similarly, silver can contain only silver-parts. It is, therefore, untenable to say that silver-parts are in the object called "shell", which is constituted exclusively by shell-parts.<sup>53</sup> When the object in front which is an aggregate of shell-parts is apprehended as silver, *i.e.* as an aggregate of silver-parts, the cognition is not *yathārtha*; it is not a case of cognizing an object as it is; but it is a case of cognizing it differently.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, when shell is powdered, the particles of shell alone are seen and not those of silver. It means that there is no silver in shell. It is no argument to say that, since the silver particles are very negligible in shell, they are not perceived when the shell is pulverized. What is negligible is certainly perceivable. Only if they are seen as negligible could it be said that they are so.<sup>55</sup> If it be said that, since the particles of shell and of silver are extremely similar, there is the difficulty in discriminating the one set of

53. *ŚSBV*, p. 328.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

Particles from the other, one should be able to perceive the particles of gold, the particles of carbon, etc. which lie mixed up with the particles of shell, since they are dissimilar to the particles of shell. If the thesis of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins that everything is composed of the components of all things were true, there should not be any difficulty to see particles of gold, carbon, and other objects mixed up with the particles of shell.<sup>56</sup> With a view to avoid the difficulty stated above, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins may, by giving up the thesis of "everything in everything", argue that there is silver alone in shell and not other things. Even this argument is of no avail. A person who is desirous of silver may think of getting silver from the silver particles by putting them into fire. But the moment he knows the truth that the particles are those of shell, his volitional activity gets arrested, and he is no more interested in them, which only means that there is no silver therein.<sup>57</sup> It is, therefore, wrong to say that in shell there is real silver. The contention that *śruti* itself has stated that there is silver in shell, cannot be substantiated.<sup>58</sup>

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins say that the silver which exists in the shell is not serviceable in life, whereas the silver which is in a shop is serviceable. Owing to the non-apprehension of difference (*vivekāgraha*) between the shell-silver and the elsewhere silver, a person picks up the shell-silver; and as soon as he knows the truth, he throws the object away, because the silver therein is not serviceable.<sup>59</sup> If both

56. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Rāmānuja's claim is: "*śuktyādaḥ rajatādeśca bhāvaḥ śrutyaiḥ bodhitāḥ*." See his *Śrībhāṣya*, I, i, 1, p. 184.

59. See Nṛsiṃhāśrama's commentary on the *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, I, 20: "*vyavahāraḥ pravṛtti-  
viśaya-vāgyasya, tadvyavahāra-rajatā-vivekāgrahāt tasya  
jātaḥ*."

shell-silver and the elsewhere silver are real, it is necessary to explain why the latter is serviceable in life whereas the former is not. There is no satisfactory answer to this difficulty in the theory of *yathārtha-khyāti*. Further, if the shell-silver, though real, is not serviceable like the market-silver, it follows that its reality is not on a par with that of the market-silver: *i.e.* the shell-silver is real in one sense, and the market-silver in another sense. In the context of the distinction between the shell-silver and the market-silver, this conclusion has become inevitable to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, though they repudiate the theory of degrees or levels of reality.

Holding the view that every cognition reveals an object as it is (*yathārtham*), the Viśiṣṭādvaitins argue that the cognition of shell which is in front as silver is *yathārtha*; and they try to justify this view, as stated earlier, by saying that the silver which is cognized exists in shell. If the cognition, "This is silver," is *yathārtha* on the score that there is a real cognitum corresponding to the cognition, then the sublating cognition, "This is not silver," which follows the earlier cognition cannot be *yathārtha*. If so, the thesis that every cognition is *yathārtha* does not hold good.<sup>60</sup>

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins may try to substantiate their thesis that every cognition is *yathārtha* in the following way. When a person sees the silver-part of the shell, he has the cognition, "This is silver," and this cognition is *yathārtha*. When later on he sees the shell-part of the shell, he has the cognition, "This is not silver," and this cognition too, they may argue, is *yathārtha*. This argument is of no avail. If the explanation given above were true, then after knowing the truth that the object in front is shell, the person concerned should, by apprehending the silver-part

60. ŚŚBV, p. 329.

of shell, perceive it as silver. He does not, however, do so. On the contrary, his cognition of it is to the effect, "This is not silver."<sup>61</sup>

It is argued that, if one object (*e.g.* silver) is similar to another object (*e.g.* shell), it is because of the fact that it contains within itself some part of that other thing.<sup>62</sup> This argument is not convincing. It is impossible for one object to have a part of another object. The components out of which shell is constituted are different from those out of which silver is constituted. Shell can never contain within itself a part of silver, and vice versa.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of *yathārtha-khyāti* may now be examined from the point of view of the sublating cognition. The object in front is shell. A person perceives it as silver, *i.e.* he has the cognition, "This is silver." If the silver that is perceived in the shell is real, how do the Viśiṣṭādvaitins explain the cognition, "This is not silver," (*nedaṁ rajatam*) which follows the earlier cognition, "This is silver." Though the cognition "This is not silver", which is negative in form, seems to negate silver, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins say that it does not do so, because silver is actually existent in shell, and what is existent cannot be denied. Then, what is it that is referred to by the negative judgment "This is not silver"? The answer, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, is silver. Sudarśana says that the negative particle *nañ* in the judgment "*na idaṁ rajatam*" denotes shell. According to him, shell may be denoted in two ways—negatively by the judgment "*na idaṁ rajatam*" and positively by the word "*śuktiḥ*". So shell is the object of the cognition, "This is

61. *Ibid.*

62. See Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, I, i, 1, p. 184: "*tadeva sadṛśaṁ tasya yatṭad-draṣyaikadeśabhāk.*"

not silver", which follows the earlier cognition, "This is silver."<sup>63</sup>

The explanation given above is, no doubt, interesting; but it is untenable. Let us analyse the issue in the following way. There are three possibilities to be considered. (1) Does the negative particle *nañ* mean "shell"? (2) Or, does the negative particle *nañ* which occurs in the sentence "*nedañ rajatam*" refer to "shell"? (3) Or, does the sentence "*nedañ rajatam*" taken as a whole refer to "shell"? The first alternative cannot be accepted. If the negative particle *nañ* means "shell" (*śukti*), then the expression "*na ghaṭaḥ*", will mean "*śuktiḥ ghaṭaḥ*", i.e. "shell is pot", which is absurd.<sup>64</sup> The second alternative fares no better. If the negative particle which occurs in the sentence "*nedañ rajatam*" refers to "shell," then the sentence, as a result of substituting the word "shell" for the word *nañ*, will mean, "*idañ rajatam śuktiḥ*," i.e. "This silver is shell." This is not acceptable. In the given context, the person concerned perceives the object which is in front (shell) as shell. He does not perceive the silver as shell. If he were to perceive silver as shell, then the sentence could be in the form, "This silver is shell." Such a cognition, however, cannot be *yathārtha*, for it is a case of cognizing silver as shell.<sup>65</sup> The third alternative is also untenable. To construe the

63. See Sudarśana's commentary on the *Śribhāṣya*, I, i, 1, p. 186: "*'nedañ rajatam' ityatra nañarthah ka iti cet, śuktitvameva iti brūmah, yadākāragrahaṇena pūrvajñānotpannāyāḥ pravṛtter-nivṛttervā nivāraṇam sa eva ākāraḥ nañarthah, sa ca ākāraḥ pratiyogisāpekṣair- 'nedañ rajatam' ityādisabdais-tadanapekṣaiḥ śuktyādisabdaisca vyavahriyate.*" Sudarśana's point is this: if the judgment is made with reference to *pratiyogi*, it will assume the negative form, "This is not silver;" but if no reference is made to *pratiyogi*, then it will be in the positive form, "This is shell."

64. *ŚSBV*, p. 330.

65. *Ibid.*

meaning of a sentence, one should first of all know the meanings of the individual words in a sentence. If it be said that the sentence "*na idam rajatam*" refers to "shell", what does each word in this sentence mean? Here there are three words, viz *na*, *idam*, *rajatam*. The meaning of "*idam*" is "this", and the word "*rajatam*" means "silver." So we have to consider the meaning of the negative particle *nañ* that is left over. The negative particle *nañ* has six meanings—similarity, difference, littleness, oppositeness, non-excellence and non-existence.<sup>66</sup> The first four meanings will not hold good here. It cannot be said that what is *similar to* silver, or what is *different from* silver, or what is *less than* silver, or what is *opposed to* silver, is necessarily shell. It can be any other entity. The last two meanings are equally untenable here. Since the Viśiṣṭādvaitins do not accept negative category at all, they cannot adopt the last two meanings, i.e. non-excellence and non-existence, which are negative.<sup>67</sup> Since none of the three words refers to "shell," the contention that the sentence "This is not silver" (*nedañ rajatam*) refers to "shell" cannot be accepted. Rejecting the Viśiṣṭādvaita explanation, we have to say that the sublating cognition in the context denies the silverness of the "this".

Dream objects are not real. Nor are they the creations of God for the purpose of providing a certain type of

66. "*tatsādṛśyamabhāvaśca tadanyatvañ tadālpatā aprāśastyam virodhaśca nañarthāṣṣaṭprakīrtitā.*"

67. ŚSBV, p. 331: "*nā dyaścatvārah—rajatasadṛśam, rajatādanyat, rajatādālpatam, rajatavirodhi vā vastu śuktireveti niyamābhāvena, śuktitoarūpa-vākyārthāsiddheḥ. nāntyau dvau—tava mate abhāvā-nabhyupagamāt, aprāśastyasyāpi prāśastyābhāvarūpatvena abhāva-tvācca.*"

See *Yatīndramatadīpikā*, IV, 4: "*etena abhāvāḥ saptaṁapadārtha ityapi nirastam. abhāvasya bhāvāntara-rūpatvāt.*"

experience to the dreamer alone at that time. *Śruti* declares that the variegated world of experience is the creation of the *jīva* who is involved in the triple stream of experience—waking, dream, and deep sleep—through his threefold body, gross, subtle, and causal.<sup>68</sup> The entire world of dream is due to the *avidyā* of the *jīva* and is, therefore, *mithyā* like the rope-serpent. The existence of a dream object, like that of the rope-serpent, is coincident with its perception. It exists only at the time of its perception. Further, the cognition of a dream object suffers sublation by waking experience. No one claims that the objects of dream experience are real. Nor can it be said that, in the case of the perception of the conch as yellow, the yellowness as seen in a conch is real. The yellowness of the bilious matter in the eye can never be transferred even for a short while by the visual rays to the conch in front. If the colour is actually transferred to the conch, then some one else, who is by the side of the person suffering from jaundice, should be able to see the conch as yellow at that time. This, however, is not the case. If it be said that since the yellowness is too subtle to be seen by another person, then the yellowness which is too subtle can never obscure the whiteness of the conch even to one who suffers from jaundice.<sup>69</sup>

## 6

Admitting that only cognitions which form a series are real and that there are no objects separate from cognitions, the Vijñānavādins argue that in error a cognition (*vijñāna*) which is internal is perceived in the form of an object existing outside. For example, the object called silver which is perceived in front is nothing but the cognition which is internal. According to the Vijñānavādins, a cog-

68. *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, 14.

69. *ŚSBV*, p. 333.



nition assumes a particular form due to the impressions (*vāsanā*) of past experience which is beginningless.<sup>70</sup> Error consists in seeing what is internal as external; and the externality of cognition is due to the impressions of the beginningless *avidyā*.

The Vijñānavādins cite the case of dream experience to show that there can be a cognition without an object corresponding to it outside. They also take advantage of the simultaneous apprehension (*sahopalambha*) of the cognition and its content in order to support their thesis.<sup>71</sup> An object is cognized invariably along with its cognition; and in the absence of cognition an object is never cognized. From the fact that cognition and its object are apprehended together invariably, the Vijñānavādins conclude that the object is not separate from the cognition. Further, the Vijñānavādins say that the sublating cognition shows that the externality of cognition alone is false. The cognition, "This is silver," is followed by the cognition, "This is not silver." What is it that is denied by the sublating cognition? The Vijñānavādins answer this question by saying that the sublating cognition negates only the "this-ness" (*idam̐tā*) which characterizes silver, and not the silver. When the work of the sublating cognition can be explained in this way, there is, the Vijñānavādins argue, no need to say that the sublating cognition negates silver. While this explanation of the sublating cognition is intelligible and free from difficulty, to say that the sublating cognition denies silver will amount to the denial of both silver and its attribute, viz "this-ness"; for, when the object (*dharmin*) is denied, its attribute (*dharma*) has also to be denied. Instead of saying that both silver and its "this-ness" are negated by

70. See Vācaspati, *Bhāmatī*, p. 24.

71. See *ŚBSB*, II, ii, 28: "*sahopalambhaniyamādabhedo viśaya-vijñānāyorāpaṭati*." See also *Iṣṭasiddhi*, p. 13: "*evam sahopalambhaniyamāt dr̥g-dr̥śyayorabhedah̐ prāptaḥ*."

the sublating cognition, it is simpler to say that only the "this-ness" of silver is negated. If so, the sublating cognition, which denies only the "this-ness", i.e. the externality of silver, shows by implication that silver is internal.<sup>72</sup> To perceive silver, which is within and which is nothing but cognition, as something external in the form of an object is, according to the Vijñānavādins, a case of error. The explanation of error given by the Vijñānavādins is called *ātma-khyāti*, because error consists in apprehending the internal cognition, which is the "self", in the form of an external object such as silver.

The following points emerge in the explanation of error in terms of *ātma-khyāti*: (a) the object of error, e.g. silver, is existent (*sat*); (b) it is apprehended as existing in front; (c) the externality of the object which is no other than the cognition is erroneous; and (d) the negation of the externality of the object proves that the object is internal.

The theory of *ātma-khyāti* of the Vijñānavādins cannot stand examination. First of all, the philosophical position on which it is grounded is unsound. It cannot be said that there is no external object outside cognition and related to it. The existence of an object external to cognition is a matter of experience through the senses; and what is experienced through the senses cannot be denied.<sup>73</sup>

Nor is it possible to hold the view that the external object which one is conscious of is not separate from cognition. Every cognition, whether veridical or erroneous, has an objective reference; a cognitum points to a cognition of which it is the content. If cognitions differ from

72. See *Bhāmatī*, p. 24.

73. See *ŚBSB*, II, ii, 28: "na ca upalabhyamānasyaivābhāvo bhavitumarhati...indriyasannikarṣeṇa svayamupalabhamāna eva bāhyamārthaṁ nāhamupalabhe naca so'stīti bruvan katham upādeya-vacanaḥ syāt."

one another, it is because of the different cognita to which they are related. Pot-cognition is different from tree-cognition; and tree-cognition is different from cow-cognition. Though cognition as such is one, nevertheless we claim to have different cognitions; and the difference among these cognitions is due to the difference among the external objects such as pot, tree, cow, etc. to which they are related.<sup>74</sup> In the absence of external objects, the difference among the cognitions can never be explained in terms of the impressions (*vāsanā*) of past experience.<sup>75</sup> This difficulty apart, it will be impossible for the Vijñānavādins to distinguish a veridical perception from an erroneous one on the basis of their theory that there are no external objects other than cognitions. If a cognition reveals an object as it is, it is said to be veridical; and if it fails to do so, it is erroneous. It means that reference has to be made to the external object for the purpose of distinguishing a valid cognition from an erroneous one. The distinction cannot be made with reference to cognitions alone. It is true that the Vijñānavādins say that to perceive what is internal as external is a case of error. It will be shown in the sequel that they are not strictly speaking entitled to draw such a distinction between the internal and the external within the framework of their philosophy by pressing into service the concept of externality.

Further, it is wrong to invoke the principle of simultaneous or together apprehension (*sahopalambha-niyama*) for justifying the view that an object is not separate from its cognition. It is true that a cognitum and its cognition appear together: there is, that is to say, cognitive concomitance between them. If they are apprehended together, it is not because of the non-difference (*abheda*) between them, but because of the means-end relation (*upāya-upeya-bhāva*)

74. See *SBSB*, II, ii, 28.

75. See *SBSB*, II, ii, 30.

that obtains between them.<sup>76</sup> Cognition and the cognitum are related as the revealer and the revealed. Cognition which is the revealer, *i.e.* the *upāya*, is undoubtedly different from the object revealed which is the *upeya*. Further, the term "together apprehension" (*sahopalambha*) implies the idea of distinction between two things, *viz* cognitum and cognition.<sup>77</sup> In the absence of two things, it is meaningless to speak of "together". So, the distinction between cognitum and cognition which can never be obliterated has to be accepted by the Vijñānavādins.

The explanation of the sublating cognition given by the Vijñānavādins is equally unsatisfactory. What is denied cannot be *sat*; and since the silver which is perceived is negated by the sublating cognition, it is wrong to say that it is real or existent (*sat*).

The Vijñānavādins claim that the object of an erroneous cognition is of the nature of cognition, and that the cognition which is internal is wrongly perceived as an object outside. If so, do they hold this view on the strength of the cognition itself or on the strength of the sublating cognition? The former alternative does not support the claim of the Vijñānavādins. The cognition as it takes place is in the form "This is silver". Since the "this" (*idam*) stands for the external object which is in front, it means that the cognition shows the silver to be outside the person. If the silver which is cognized is nothing but the cognition which is internal as claimed by the Vijñānavādins, then it should show the object to be within; and since, according to the Vijñānavādins, the subject and the object, *i.e.* the knower and the known, are but different forms of cognition, the

76. See *SBSB*, II, ii, 28: "...sahopalambhaniyamo'pi pratyaya-viśayayoḥ upāya-upeya-bhāvaḥ ketuko, nābhedaḥ ketuka ityabhyupagantaḥ."

77. See *Iṣṭasiddhi*, p. 13: "abhede saḥabhānāyogat."

cognition in this case should be in the form, "I am silver." The cognition, however, does not take place in this form. It means that the Vijñānavādins cannot hold the view that the object cognized in error is of the nature of cognition and that it is, therefore, internal. Nor can they support their claim on the strength of the sublating cognition. What we find is that the sublating cognition, "This is not silver," through the work of negation distinguishes the "this", i.e. the object which is in front, from silver. It does not show that the silver which is cognized is of the nature of cognition. If it were to show silver to be of the nature of cognition, it must, as stated earlier, be in the form, "I am silver."<sup>78</sup>

The Vijñānavādins argue that the sublating cognition does not deny the silverness of the "this" in front; but it denies, they say, the "this-ness" of silver. Since it denies the presence in front or the proximity (*sannidhāna*) of silver, the implication is, so the Vijñānavādins argue, that the silver cognized is internal, and that as internal it is nothing but cognition. This argument too is unsound. If the sublating cognition denies the proximity or the presence in front of silver as claimed by them, it will follow by implication that the silver is far away; for what is not proximate must be remote. It does not, however, follow that what is not proximate to the cognizer is extremely proximate (*atyanta-sannidhāna*) to him.<sup>79</sup> The Vijñānavādins argue on the ground of parsimony that it would be better to say that the sublating cognition denies only the "this-ness" or the externality of silver instead of saying that it denies both the silver and its "this-ness". Even this argument is not convincing. The evidence of the sublating cognition must be taken as it is without twisting and torturing it. When the sublating cognition says that the "this" in front is not

78. See *Bhāmātī*, p. 25. Also see *Svārājyasiddhi*, p. 187.

79. *Ibid.*

silver, it has to be interpreted as negating silver. If so, it is wrong to say that only the "externality" of silver is denied by the sublating cognition. Further, if only the externality of silver is negated by the sublating cognition, then following the correction of error one should have such a cognition as "I am silver"; for, according to the Vijñānavādins, the cognizer is not different from cognition. Such a cognition, however, does not take place.

It is the contention of the Vijñānavādins that error arises when silver which is internal is seen as the "this". It is necessary to know whether the "this" with which the silver is related is external (*bāhyam*) or internal (*āntaram*). If the Vijñānavādins would say that it is external, there arises *anyathā-khyāti*, for the object which is internal is seen differently as external. If it is internal, it should not be seen as external.<sup>80</sup> There is yet another difficulty when the Vijñānavādins say that what is internal appears as something external. Since they do not admit the existence of external objects different from cognitions, they cannot make use of the concept of "externality" at all. The external object, which is totally non-existent, not only cannot be perceived, but also cannot serve as an example.<sup>81</sup> If the external object were non-existent, the comparison "like something external" (*bahirvat*) would be meaningless. No one says that Viṣṇumitra is like the son of a barren woman.<sup>82</sup> The very fact that the Vijñānavādins say that what is internal appears as something external shows that they admit the reality of the external object.

80. See *Svārājyasiddhi*, p. 187.

81. See Rāmānanda's *Ratnaprabhā* on *ŚBSB*, II, ii, 28: "bāhyārthasya atyantāsatve pratyakṣopalambhāyogāt. dr̥ṣṭāntatvāsambhavācca, bahirvacohabdo na syādityarthah"

82. See *ŚBSB*, II, ii, 28: "nāhi viṣṇumitro vandhyāputravad-avabhāsata iti kaścīdācakṣita."

## 7

The Advaita theory of *anirvacanīya-khyāti* which differs from the theories of error discussed so far is worked out on the basis of epistemological realism. While the other theories of error hold that the object of error is either *sat* or *asat*, Advaita maintains that the object of error is *anirvacanīya*. Hence the Advaita theory of error is altogether different from the other theories.<sup>83</sup> According to Advaita, every cognition, whether veridical or erroneous, has an objective reference.<sup>84</sup> In the case of perceptual error, the object which is apprehended is not mediate, but immediate. What is mediate does not admit of direct perception. The shell-silver, however, is directly perceived. When a person sees the shell which is in front as silver, the object of his cognition, *viz* silver, is immediate; and this rules out the possibility of its being an object of memory. It is well-known that in the case of memory its object is not immediately present.<sup>85</sup> In so far as the object of error is cognized, it is not unreal (*asat*), for what is unreal, *e.g.* sky-flower, can never be an object of perception. Nor can it be real (*sat*). What does not suffer contradiction by later experience alone is real. Since the object of erroneous cognition suffers sublation by the subsequent cognition, it cannot be real. It cannot also be both real and unreal, for it amounts to predicating contradictory qualities of one and the same entity at the same time in violation of the law of contradic-

83. It is usual to speak of five theories of error. *Ātma-khyāti*, *akhyāti* and *anyathā-khyāti* are brought under *sat-khyāti*. The *asat-khyāti* of the Mādhyamikas forms a class by itself. As distinguished from these four theories, there is the Advaita theory of *anirvacanīya-khyāti*. The theories of the Bhāṭṭas, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, and the Dvaita Vedāntins are not reckoned separately, as they are only variations of other theories.

84. "svagocarasūratvāt sarvajñānānām."

85. See *Bhāmātī*, p. 17: "asannihitaviśayatvaṁ ca smṛtirūpatvam."

tion. So the object of erroneous cognition is ontologically different from both *sat* and *asat*, (*sadasadvilakṣaṇa*). Since it is indeterminable as either real or unreal, it is said to be *anirvacanīya*. Such an entity cannot be but false (*mithyā*) or an illusory appearance (*mithyāabhāsa*).

According to Advaita, perceptual error can take place only if there is an object which serves as the substratum or ground (*adhiṣṭhāna*) on which an entity which is false is superimposed. The shell in front which is cognized only in a general way as "this" is the ground on which the false silver is superimposed. The "this" which is the ground is perceived at the time of erroneous cognition as well as at the time when correction takes place through the sublating cognition. Since there is no sublation to the "this", but only to the silver which is falsely predicated of the "this", the ground alone, *i.e.* the shell in front, is real, but not the silver falsely superimposed thereon. In other words, of the two terms related in the erroneous judgment, while the subject is empirically real, the predicate is phenomenally real. It is on the strength of the sublating cognition that Advaita holds the view that the object of error which cannot be dismissed as unreal must be credited with a degree of reality lower than that of the ground on which it is superimposed. Further, the relation between the subject and the predicate of an erroneous judgment, *i.e.* between the ground and the superimposed object, is false (*mithyā*), because the relata here do not have the same degree of reality. The relation that obtains between what is real and what is false must necessarily be false. Since the object of error is false, it follows that the resulting cognition is also false.<sup>86</sup> In the case of erroneous cognition, the cognitum and the cognition are co-extensive: the object, *e.g.* shell-silver, exists only at the time of its perception; and only because of its perception, it is said to be existent. The object of

86. See BS, Part I, p. 9.



error which is phenomenal exists neither before its perception nor subsequent to its sublation, but only at the time of its perception. Thus, though both erroneous and valid cognitions *qua* cognition have objective reference, they differ in two important respects. First of all, while the object of erroneous cognition which is apprehended only by the person concerned is "private", that of a valid cognition is "public", for it is open to perception by different individuals at the same time, and it is perceived practically in the same way by all of them. Secondly, while the object of erroneous cognition exists only at the time of its perception, that of a valid cognition has a more enduring existence. In order to bring out the difference in the nature of reality between the object of error and that of a valid cognition, Advaita labels the former as phenomenal (*prātibhāsika*) and the latter as empirical (*vyāvahārika*). It may be added here that according to Advaita the objects which possess empirical reality, though more enduring than those which possess only phenomenal reality, get sublated at the time of Brahman-realization. Brahman for which there is no sublation at any time is absolutely real (*pāramārthika*).

When the object in front is only shell, how is it that there is the appearance of silver therein? Advaita answers this question in terms of *avidyā*. According to Advaita, while *avidyā* is the transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyupādānakāraṇa*) of error, conditions such as defective vision, want of light, similarity, etc., which are variable contribute, each in its own way in a given situation, to the occurrence of error. Advaita explains the shell-silver cognition in the following way. In a given situation the shell in front is perceived as "this" in a general way through sense-object contact; and this cognition is obtained through the mental mode (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*). *Avidyā* has the twofold power of concealment (*āvaraṇa*) and false projection (*vikṣepa*). Under the influence of conditions such as similarity between shell

and silver, *avidyā* located in the shell-delimited consciousness<sup>87</sup> transforms itself as silver, and concealing the shell-ness of the "this" projects itself as silver in unity with the "this". Corresponding to the newly created unique silver in the shell, the mode of *avidyā* (*avidyā-vṛtti*) located in the Witness-consciousness assumes through modification the form of silver.<sup>88</sup> When the newly originated unique silver and the mode of *avidyā* which has assumed the form of silver remain identified, there takes place the direct perception of silver in front. The point to be emphasized here is that, since *avidyā* has reference to a particular person and a particular object outside, the illusory object projected by *avidyā* is seen only by the person concerned at that time in that place. Here the Witness-consciousness illumines the phenomenal silver in front through the *vṛtti* of *avidyā*, in the same way as it illumines the dream objects which are also phenomenal through the *vṛtti* of *avidyā*. An object which is *prātibhāsika* is coterminous with its cognition. It means that in erroneous cognition as well as in dream both the cognitum and the cognition, which are due to *avidyā*, appear as well as disappear together. The object of error as well as its cognition is *mithyā*, because *avidyā* which is their source is *mithyā*. This is in accordance with the general principle that the effect must be of the same nature as its transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyupādāna-kāraṇa*).

Error (*bhrama*) consists in the superimposition of one thing or the characteristic of one thing on another. It is known as *adhyāsa*. Broadly speaking, error or *adhyāsa* is of

87. Strictly speaking, it should be said, "*avidyā* located in the substratum-delimited consciousness". The phenomenal silver seen in the shell is the transformation of *avidyā* with *tamas* as its dominant *guṇa* (*tamoguṇa-pradhāna-avidyāmśa-pariṇāmaḥ*).
88. *Avidyā-vṛtti-jñāna* is the modification of *avidyā* with the preponderance of *sattva-guṇa* (*sattvagūṇa-pradhāna-avidyāmśa-pariṇāmaḥ*).

two kinds—*svarūpādhyāsa* and *saṃsargādhyāsa*. The former consists in the superimposition of an object which is *mithyā* on something else which is real. The superimposition of the illusory silver on the real shell is an example of *svarūpādhyāsa*.<sup>89</sup> While this is a case of ordinary error, there is also the foundational error, in which we superimpose *avidyā* and the world of plurality which are *mithyā* on Brahman which is real, exemplifying *svarūpādhyāsa*. In the second kind of error known as *saṃsargādhyāsa*, the relation (*saṃsarga*) that obtains between a quality and an object is false or *mithyā*. For example, the characteristic of revealing a thing which constitutes the essential nature of the Self is attributed to the mind; and the relation of this characteristic with the mind is *mithyā*, though the characteristic or the power of revelation which belongs to the Self is real. Or, consider the case where a crystal (*sphaṭika*) which is white appears red because of the *japākusuma*, the external adjunct, in its proximity. This is an instance of error occasioned by the presence of an external adjunct (*upādhi*); it is, therefore, called *sopādhikābhrama*. In this case, both the crystal and the *japā* flower are in sense contact. The red colour which is real and which inheres in the *japā* flower gets reflected in the crystal. The relation of the red colour, which is elsewhere, to the crystal is *mithyā*. It may be noted here that Advaita does not explain error even in this case in terms of *anyathā-khyāti*. Since the *japā* flower is in contact with the sense organ, Advaita does not say that the red colour seen in the crystal is something newly originated by *avidyā* at that time and in that place, even though in the case of shell-silver cognition it maintains that the silver seen in a shell is newly originated at that time by *avidyā*.<sup>90</sup> It does not follow

89. This is also called *tādātmya-adhyāsa*.

90. This is based on the principle: “*yatra āropyamasannikṛṣṭam tatraiva prātibhāsikavastūtpatteraṅgikārāt.*” See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, p. 49.

from this that Advaita resorts to *anyathā-khyāti* in the explanation of *sopādhika-bhrama*.<sup>91</sup> Two points may be stressed to show how the Advaita explanation in this case is different from that given by the advocates of *anyathā-khyāti*. First of all, though the red colour contributed by the flower is real, nevertheless its relation of *tādātmya* with the crystal is *mithyā*. Secondly, though red colour may be elsewhere, the red-coloured crystal seen by the person concerned is nowhere else : it is something unique, due to *avidyā*. Just as *avidyā* is the source out of which the newly originated, unique phenomenal silver comes into existence, even so *avidyā* in this case is the source of the *saṁsarga* between the crystal and the red colour. It is *avidyā* which makes the crystal red-coloured through originating the *tādātmya* relation, which being unique is *anirvacanīya*. Since the red-coloured crystal seen here is not anywhere else, there is no *anyathā-khyāti*. The details of the example may be slightly altered to show how the Advaita explanation is altogether different from that of *anyathā-khyāti*. Let us suppose that the *japā* flower is not in sense contact due to some obstruction. However, it is so located elsewhere that its red colour is reflected in the crystal which is in sense contact ; consequently, a person sees the red-coloured crystal. In this case, Advaita would maintain, as in the case of shell-silver cognition, that a phenomenal redness is newly originated at

91. Professor S. Kuppuswami Sastri is of the view that the Advaitins "are readily willing to accept the explanation of *anyathā-khyāti* in the case of what is known as *sopādhikabhrama*, where the object of *bhrama* happens to be within the normal scope of the sense-organ, as for instance in the erroneous perception of a crystal (*sphaṭika*) as red-coloured when a *japā* (China rose) is seen to be in its vicinity." Again, he says that *anirvacanīya-khyāti* "easily accommodates itself ... to *anyathā-khyāti* by complete surrender in the case of *sopādhika-bhrama*." See his *A Primer of Indian Logic*, pp. 130—131. But there is no justification for this view in view of the differences between the two explanations.

that time and in that place by *avidyā*, and that both the newly created red colour and its relation with crystal are *mithyā*.<sup>92</sup> So depending upon the type of error, either an object which is *mithyā* is related to another object which is real through a unique relation called *tādātmya* which is also *mithyā*, or a quality is associated with another object through a relation which is *mithyā*.

It is usual to account for error in terms of five conditions: (1) the residual impression of the previous cognition of a real object (*satyavastvanubhava-janya-saṁskāra*), (2) defect in the object of knowledge (*prameya-doṣa*), (3) defect in the cognizer (*pramātṛ-doṣa*), (4) defect in the instrument of valid cognition (*pramāṇa-doṣa*), and (5) cognition of the generic feature of the substratum without the cognition of its specific feature (*adhiṣṭhāna-viśeṣājñānam, tatsāmānya-jñānam*). According to Advaita, only three conditions are invariably present in all cases of error. They are: (1) the substratum whose generic feature alone is perceived, (2) *avidyā*, the material cause of error, which suppresses the true and suggests the false, and (3) the impression due to the previous experience of the object superimposed. Depending upon the particular type of error that arises, other conditions stated above are sometimes present and sometimes absent. Consider the case of the perception of *ākāśa* as blue by all of us. To see *ākāśa* as blue is a case of error which takes place in spite of the absence of conditions such as *pramāṇa-doṣa*, *prameya-doṣa*, and *pramātṛ-doṣa*. All of us see *ākāśa* as blue, though none of us suffer from any defect in the visual sense; and so there is no defect in the instrument of cognition. Since there is no similarity between *ākāśa* and blue colour, there is no defect in the object. Nor is there the defect in the cognizer such as fear, desire, etc. to be a condition of this error. Since this error takes place notwithstanding the absence of these conditions, it is wrong

92. See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, p. 50.

to say that these conditions are necessary for the occurrence of error. While the residual impression caused by the previous cognition of the superimposed object is necessary, Advaita insists that the thing cognized earlier need not be real (*satya-vastu*). The residual impression of an illusory object experienced earlier may as well serve the purpose. To mistake a piece of rope for a snake in a given situation, it is enough if a child, for example, has the impression of a snake in its mind caused by its experience of a toy-snake. The given substratum alone, *e.g.* shell, will not do, even though it is necessary, for the occurrence of error. In addition to it, *avidyā* is required. The substratum, whose generic feature alone is cognized without its specific nature and which does not undergo any change whatsoever, serves as the ground for the superimposition of an illusory object thereon by *avidyā* which undergoes modification. A material cause is one which has the capacity to give rise to an effect in its own being.<sup>93</sup> If so, the substratum and *avidyā*, each in its own way, serve as the material cause. While the substratum which does not undergo any change is the transfigurative material cause (*vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*), *avidyā* which is subject to modification is the transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyopādāna-kāraṇa*) of error. It is in the very being of the shell which is the unchanging substratum that the illusory snake appears. So shell is the transfigurative material cause of error. Since *avidyā* through modification projects the appearance of silver, it is the transformative material cause.

Some of the objections raised against the Advaita theory of *anirvacanīya-khyāti* may now be considered. There is first of all the objection that the Advaitin cannot avoid *anyathā-khyāti*. If the Advaitin does not admit that one thing appears as another, *e.g.* shell as silver, he cannot

93. " *upādānatā hi svātmani kāryajanihetutvam.* "

account for the erroneous cognition of the object, the ensuing activity, and the sublating cognition. In so far as he admits error, the volitional activity that follows it, and the sublating cognition, it amounts to accepting, the critic argues, that one thing is perceived as something different.<sup>94</sup> This objection does not hold good. There is no need to accept *anyathā-khyāti* for the purpose of explaining the cognition of the object, e.g. shell-silver, and what follows thereafter. If *anyathā-khyāti* would be sufficient to account for the cognition of shell as silver, then one could as well argue in terms of *anyathā-khyāti* that clay is seen as pot in the same way as shell is seen as silver; and this would rule out the necessity of admitting the creation of a pot from clay.<sup>95</sup> This, however, is not acceptable to those who uphold *anyathā-khyāti* as well as those who are sympathetic towards it.<sup>96</sup> The point insisted on by the Advaitin here is this: just as we say that a pot is created in (from) clay, even so silver is created in the shell. A person perceives the silver created in the shell, tries to pick it up, and realizes as a result of the sublating cognition that the silver seen by him is not the real silver, but only an illusory one. It cannot be said that the shell-silver comes into existence without a cause (*akāraṇaka*).<sup>97</sup> Just as there is the causal aggregate

94. See Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, p. 181. “*anyathābhānābhyupagā-mādeva khyāti-pravṛtti-bādha-bhramatvānāmupapatteḥ*.”

95. See *ŚSBV*, p. 322: “*yadyanyathā-khyātyaiva śuktirajatapratīti-nirvāhaḥ, tarhi tayaiva mṛdghaṭādipratīti-nirvāhopīti ghaṭādikāryot-pattiyabhyupagamopi vyarthaḥ...*”

96. Though Rāmānuja is committed to *yathārtha-khyāti*, he is very much inclined towards *anyathā-khyāti*. He says that all those who advocate other theories of error will have to admit in the final stage the principle of *anyathā-khyāti*. See his *Śrībhāṣya*, p. 182.

97. Rāmānuja remarks that the indeterminable shell-silver is not only *atyantāparidrṣṭa*, but also *akāraṇaka*. See his *Śrībhāṣya*, p. 182.

consisting of the stick, the wheel, water, etc., to account for the creation of a pot from clay, even so there is the causal aggregate such as the substratum, its bright and white features, *avidyā*, the residual impression of silver previously experienced, for the creation of silver in the shell which is in front.

There is again the objection that it is unreasonable to assume the existence of an unperceived indeterminable silver; for the silver, when apprehended, is apprehended as something real (*paramārtha*) and not as something indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). When the shell-silver is not perceived as indeterminable, why should the Advaitin, the critic asks, assume the existence of such an entity?<sup>98</sup> This objection, too, is of no avail. At the time of perception the shell-silver is perceived as real; and this is the reason why the person concerned tries to pick it up. That it is indeterminable is known only later on as a result of the subsuming cognition. A pot, for example, though non-existent before its production and after its destruction, is seen as real at the time when it exists. Because it is non-existent at other times, it is not seen as non-existent even while it exists. In the same way, though the person realizes later on that the silver seen by him earlier is indeterminable, when he perceives it, he perceives it as something real or existent (*paramārtha*). Since what is unreal cannot be perceived and since what is real cannot suffer contradiction, the Advaitin, on the basis of both perception (*pratīti*) and subsuming (*bādha*), is justified in his view that the shell-silver is indeterminable as either real or unreal.<sup>99</sup>

The critic argues that the nature of shell-silver may be determined as both real and unreal on the ground that the shell-silver is real at the time of perception and unreal at

98. *Śrībhāṣya*, p. 182.

99. See *ŚSBV*, p. 323.



the time of sublation. It is, therefore, wrong to say, according to the critic, that it is indeterminable. Even this objection is untenable. One and the same entity cannot be both real (*sat*) and unreal (*asat*). What is *sat* can never be *asat* at the same time or at a later time. As stated earlier, there is no sublation for what is real; and what is unreal cannot be perceived. Since the shell-silver is both perceived and sublated, it cannot be both *sat* and *asat*; on the contrary, it must be different from both *sat* and *asat*: that is, it should be characterized as *sadasadvilakṣaṇa* or *anirvacanīya*.<sup>100</sup>

Even if it is conceded for the sake of argument that a unique silver is created in the shell at the time of its perception, the Advaitin, the critic urges, has to accept *anyathā-khyāti*, for the newly created silver which is not real (*aparamārtha*) appears as real (*paramārtha*) at the time of its perception. Even this argument is not acceptable. The person concerned perceives the silver, which is newly created in the shell, as silver. To perceive silver as silver is not *anyathā-khyāti*. The difference between the shell-silver and the real silver is not in respect of their form (*ākāra*), for both are silver. If the former were to have a form different from that of the latter, it would not be cognized as silver. Though both are silver, they are differentiated by their qualifications.<sup>101</sup> While the shell-silver is the *not-real-silver* (*aparamārtha-rajata*), the other one is the *real-silver* (*paramārtha-rajata*). Since the silver in the shell, when apprehended, is apprehended as silver, there is no question of *anyathā-khyāti*; and that it is not *paramārtha* is known not at the time of its perception, but only later on. It may be noted here that the reality that belongs to the

100. *Ibid.*, p. 323 : "sato bādhāyogādasataḥ pratītyayogūcca, pratiyamānasya bādhayamānasyaca anirvacanīyatvam ityuktatvāt."

101. *Ibid.*, p. 323 : "paramārthāparamārtha-rajatayorākārabhedābhāvāt. ākārabhede sati bhramasyaiva utpattiyasambhavāt."

substratum, *viz* the shell, is seen in the superimposed silver, and so the latter is perceived and spoken of as real at the time of erroneous cognition.<sup>102</sup> Sublation of shell-silver is possible only because of the fact that its reality is something borrowed from the given substratum. If the shell-silver were real, it can never be sublated.

To sum up: according to Advaita, (1) the object of erroneous perception which is immediate is something ontologically unique, being different from both *sat* and *asat*, *i.e.* it is *anirvacanīya*; (2) it exists only at the time of its perception in the place where it is seen; (3) it comes into existence from *avidyā*, which is its material cause, simultaneously with its cognition; and it disappears along with its cognition when *avidyā* which is their source is removed by the right knowledge of the object; and (4) such an entity which is "private" is called *prātibhāsika* for the purpose of differentiating it from other "public" objects which are said to be *vyāvahārika*.

102. See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, p. 49. See also *ŚSBV*, p. 327.

### CHAPTER III

## NATURE OF REALITY

### 1

Brahman which is the ultimate reality is defined in two ways—in terms of its essential nature as well as accidental attributes superimposed thereon. That is the essential nature of a thing which is present in that thing so long as it lasts and distinguishes it from the rest; but an accidental attribute of a thing remains in that thing only for a time and differentiates it from others. These two kinds of definition are called *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* and *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*.<sup>1</sup> *Śruti* texts which say that Brahman is real, knowledge, infinite, and bliss define Brahman in terms of its essential nature.<sup>2</sup> Since Brahman is free from attributes (*nirguṇa*), “bliss”, “knowledge”, etc. are not the attributes of Brahman; but they constitute the essential nature of Brahman. Words such as “bliss”, “knowledge”, are not used in these texts in the qualifying sense, but in the defining sense with a view to differentiate Brahman from everything else. The *śruti* text, which says that Brahman is “that from which these beings are born, that by which they live, and that into which they finally enter,”<sup>3</sup> defines Brahman in terms of

1. See *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, pp. 114-115: “*svarūpameva lakṣaṇam svarūpalakṣaṇam;*” “*taṭasthalakṣaṇam nāma yāvallakṣyakālam - anavasthitatve sati yat vyāvartakam tadeva.*”

2. *TU*, II, i, 1; III, vi, 1.

3. *Ibid.*, III, i, 1.

certain accidental attributes which make Brahman relational, even though Brahman in itself is non-dual and, therefore, non-relational. As the source and support of the world, Brahman comes to be related to the world, though from the absolute standpoint Brahman alone is, without any second to it. While the definition *per accidens* (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) of Brahman is from the relative standpoint, the definition by essential nature (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) is from the absolute standpoint. There is also a methodological device in offering the twofold definition of Brahman. It is easy for a beginner to understand the nature of Brahman when it is defined as the cause and support of the world in terms of accidental attributes superimposed thereon. In view of the logical difficulties which arise in the employment of the categories such as causality with regard to Brahman, the ultimate reality, attributes like the causality of the world superimposed on Brahman are subsequently withdrawn; and then Brahman is defined in terms of its essential nature as real, knowledge, infinite, and bliss. The technique involved in the explanation of the Absolute in this way, first through the attributes superimposed thereon and then through the denial of them for bringing out its essential nature, is known as the method of superimposition (*adhyāroḥa*) and denial (*apavāda*).<sup>4</sup>

Maṇḍana states the essential nature of Brahman in the opening verse of his *Brahmasiddhi*.<sup>5</sup> Brahman is of the nature of bliss (*ānandam*). Being infinite, it is one (*ekam*). It is of the nature of knowledge (*viññānam*). It is eternal, i.e. it has no end and beginning (*amṛtam, ajam*). It is *akṣaram* not only in the sense that it is immutable, but also in the sense that it is of the nature of sound (*śabdātmakam*). It is, indeed, all this world (*sarvam*), because it is the source of everything; and yet it is different from all this (*asarvam*). Being non-dual, it is the perfection of security (*abhayam*).

4. See BS, Part I, 26.

5. BS, Part I, p. 1.

## 2

According to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Brahman which is infinite is bliss.<sup>6</sup> The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* says that Bhṛgu understood bliss to be Brahman.<sup>7</sup> If the infinite Brahman, as stated in these texts, is of the nature of bliss, what does the word "bliss" mean? The direct or primary sense of the word "bliss" is happiness. Is it possible to construe its meaning negatively? Maṇḍana examines at great length two views which, giving up the primary meaning of this term, explain it negatively, and rejects them. While according to one view bliss is absence of misery, according to the other bliss is absence of desire. We shall consider these two views one after another.

Two reasons are given to show why "bliss" can be interpreted negatively as absence of misery (*duḥkhābhāva*). If bliss which is Brahman is happiness in the positive sense of the term, the longing for happiness on the part of anyone is due to attachment (*rāga*). The pursuit of anything due to attachment will only strengthen bondage; it will not be helpful to overcome bondage. The *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman-realization is possible for one who is calm, self-controlled, and withdrawn,<sup>8</sup> and not for one who is given to attachment. Attachment is possible only with regard to what is positive and not what is negative. Unlike the longing for happiness, the desire for the absence of misery which is negative is not born of attachment. So it is preferable to explain the term "bliss" negatively as absence of misery. Further, absence of misery is quite often referred to as happiness, as when we say that a person who is free from hunger and other kinds of misery is happy. On the basis of the above interpretation it is argued that *śruti* texts which speak of Brahman as bliss refer to the state of reality

6. VII, xxiii, 1.

7. III, vi, 1.

8. BU, IV, iv, 23.

marked by the total absence of all miseries. So the word "bliss", according to this argument, means absence of misery.<sup>9</sup>

The negative interpretation of bliss or happiness as absence of misery is untenable for several reasons. First of all, if absence of misery itself is happiness, it should not be possible for one to experience pleasure and pain simultaneously. However, pleasure and pain are sometimes experienced together as in the case of a man who, afflicted by the scorching heat of the sun, experiences pleasure and pain at the same time when he is hip-deep in water. It is no argument to say that even though the person experiences pain in one part of the body which is exposed to the sun, he experiences happiness in another part of the body which is immersed in water and which is free from misery. If this argument were sound, one could as well argue that a person who experiences pain in one sense-organ is happy, because there is the absence of pain in the other part of his body. The absurdity of the argument is obvious. Secondly, consider the following case which clearly shows that happiness is altogether different from absence of misery. A person, let us say, who is free from misery is given a rose. He smells it, enjoys its fragrance, and experiences happiness. Since there is already absence of misery in him, which is happiness according to this view, it will be difficult on the basis of this view to account for his experience of happiness caused by the fragrance of the smell. Thirdly, the negative interpretation is inconsistent with the experience of grades of happiness derived from different objects and through different means. If all that is to be attained is the removal of a particular kind of misery, say hunger, why should there be the search for rich and tasty food? So bliss or happiness is not just absence of misery.<sup>10</sup>

9. *BS*, Part I, p. 1.

10. *BS*, Part I, p. 2.

The argument that the longing for bliss which is Brahman is due to attachment (*rāga*) and that the pursuit of anything due to attachment will only strengthen bondage rather than loosen it is untenable as it ignores the distinction between desire (*icchā*) and attachment (*rāga*). Ignorance (*avidyā*) is the cause of attachment which is an intense and passionate longing for the impermanent and impure objects of pleasure. The desire for the highest bliss which arises in the tranquil mind of the seekers of truth is different from attachment. This point can be elucidated by citing an analogous case. Realizing the futility of the things of the world, a person becomes detached; and his detachment is called *udvega*, and not *dveṣa* which means hatred. One may turn away from a thing because of hatred or detachment. It will be an abuse of language to say that a person intent on Brahman-realization becomes withdrawn because of the hatred of the things of the world (*saṁsāra-dveṣa*). The longing for bliss which is Brahman is not *rāga* any more than turning away from the world of bondage is *dveṣa*.<sup>11</sup> The *śruti* text<sup>12</sup> which says that one should be calm, self-controlled, and withdrawn counsels, indeed, the giving up of all desires except the one for Brahman which is bliss. Manu says: "To be filled with desires is not commendable; but still in this (*i.e.* in the matter of Brahman-realization) not to have desire is not possible."<sup>13</sup>

We shall now consider the second view according to which bliss is absence of desire (*kāmābhāva*). This view is sought to be maintained on the following ground. Desire is the root cause of misery. A person who has desires unfulfilled is miserable; and he is happy only when they are removed. Desires can be removed or extinguished only by

11. *BS*, Part I, p. 3.

12. *BU*, IV, iv, 23.

13. *Manu*, II, 2.

enjoying the objects to which they are related. Since a person experiences happiness when his desires are removed through fulfilment, happiness, it is argued, is nothing but absence of desire.<sup>14</sup>

Even this argument is not acceptable to Maṇḍana. It is not the case that the enjoyment of the desired object leads to the fulfilment of desire and thereby its extinction. On the contrary, enjoyment which is repeatedly sought after becomes a habit with the result that the same desire persists growing stronger and stronger. In this connection, Maṇḍana quotes the author of the *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya*, who says: "Desires grow keeping pace with their enjoyment; accordingly, the ability of the sense-organs also grows."<sup>15</sup> Further, it is ~~wrong to say that desire can be removed only through the enjoyment of the object desired.~~ <sup>It is possible to remove desire through an insight into the worthlessness of the object desired; this is, indeed, the only desirable course to be adopted for rooting out desire.</sup>

If happiness means absence or non-existence of desire (*kāmābhāva*), how are we to understand this "non-existence of desire"? Maṇḍana argues that, if we take the expression "non-existence of desire" generally without any specification<sup>16</sup> and say that it means happiness, it leads to absurdity. Consider the following case. A person who has not desired a certain object attains and enjoys it. In the state prior to enjoyment (*pūrvāvasthā*), there is the non-existence of desire. In the state of enjoyment (*bhogāvasthā*), the latent desire, which blossoms at the time of the attainment of the object, comes to be extinguished in the process of enjoyment, i.e. there is the absence of desire in this state.

14. BS, Part I, p. 2.

15. *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya*, 2-15.

16. i.e. as *kāmābhāva-mātram*.



The non-existence of desire continues in the state subsequent to enjoyment (*uttarāvasthā*).<sup>17</sup> In short, non-existence of desire is common to all the three states. If we accept the view that happiness is nothing but absence of desire, we should say, however absurd it may be, that the person enjoys happiness in all the three states. This is not true to experience. The truth is that the person considers himself happy only in the state of enjoyment.

Maṇḍana argues that the expression "non-existence of desire" cannot be understood in the sense of *kāma-pradhvaṁsābhāva*, i. e. the posterior non-existence of desire due to destruction. Since *pradhvaṁsābhāva* has a beginning, but no end, it is common to the state of enjoyment and the state subsequent to enjoyment. If subsequent non-existence of desire is happiness, it follows that there is happiness both in the state of enjoyment and in the state which follows it. But this is not borne out by experience, for the person considers himself happy only in the state of enjoyment. If it be said, with a view to differentiate the state of enjoyment from the other states, that the latent desire which sprouts out at the time of the attainment of the object is not extinguished in the state of enjoyment, it would lead to a conclusion glaringly at variance with our experience. Desire, according to the view which we are examining here, is of the nature of misery. If desire sprouts out, instead of dying, at the time of enjoyment, we have to say that a person in the state of enjoyment is miserable, while he is happy in the other two states characterized by the absence of misery. But this is not warranted by experience.<sup>18</sup>

Further, it is because of the prior experience of happiness that desire arises leading to a certain activity for the

17. See *BS*, Part II, p. 9.

18. *BS*, Part I, p. 3.

enjoying the objects to which they are related. Since a person experiences happiness when his desires are removed through fulfilment, happiness, it is argued, is nothing but absence of desire.<sup>14</sup>

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Further, it is because of the prior experience of happiness that desire arises leading to a certain activity for the

17. See *BS*, Part II, p. 9.

18. *BS*, Part I, p. 3.

purpose of fulfilling desire. If we desire certain things straight away in this life, even though we do not know how we come to have those desires, it is because of the experience of happiness in the previous life. For example, the desire for milk and the ensuing activity to satisfy the desire on the part of a newly born calf have to be explained in terms of the experience of happiness it had in its previous life. Since desire arises because of the prior experience of happiness, it is wrong to equate happiness with the extinction of desire.<sup>19</sup> There is yet another point to be stressed to show that absence of desire is not happiness. Absence of desire in certain cases turns out to be a source of misery. Cases of persons who are afflicted and feel miserable when they have lost the desire for certain objects of pleasurable experience are not wanting. If they feel miserable, it is because of the fact that in the absence of desire they do not have the capacity for the enjoyment of objects. For instance, a person suffering from bile (*pitta*) has no desire for food; he is one who is free from desire (*nivṛtta-kāma*) so far as food is concerned. However, he does not feel happy, though there is the absence of desire for food in him. It means that absence of desire itself is not happiness.<sup>20</sup>

The primary meaning of the word "bliss" contained in *śruti* texts such as "He knew bliss to be Brahman" is happiness. There is no justification to interpret it negatively as absence of misery (*duḥkḥābhāva*) or absence of desire (*kāmābhāva*), giving up the primary meaning of the term. In construing the meaning of the phrase "the hamlet on the Ganges" (*gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ*) we adopt the secondary sense in the place of the primary sense. In this case, the primary meaning is incompatible with the testimony of perception. It is this conflict with another *pramāṇa* that necessitates the

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

adoption of the secondary meaning of the expression “*gaṅg-āyām ghoṣaḥ*”. Since *śruti* is the only source of knowledge of Brahman, there is no scope for conflict between the evidence of *śruti* and that of other *pramāṇas*.<sup>21</sup> Where *śruti* is the *pramāṇa*, we must, observes Maṇḍana, take the sense conveyed by it directly.<sup>22</sup> However, if there is the necessity to adopt the secondary meaning instead of the primary meaning in the case of a particular *śruti* text, it arises not because of the need to conform to the evidence of some other *pramāṇa*, but because of the need to accord with the purport of the texts as revealed by the sixfold criteria. In interpreting *śruti* texts, one is not at liberty to adopt the primary or the secondary meaning according to one’s convenience. While there is no difficulty in interpreting the word “bliss” contained in *śruti* texts in the primary sense, the attempt to explain it negatively as absence of misery or absence of desire by giving up the primary sense, leads to several difficulties. Moreover, experience, observes Maṇḍana, testifies to the fact that happiness is something different from the absence of misery and the extinction of desire. It is wrong to deny what is experienced inwardly by all of us.<sup>23</sup>

Let us now examine the view that bliss is a negative attribute of Brahman. Attributes are of two kinds—positive and negative. While “grossness”, “redness”, etc. stand for positive qualities, “absence of grossness”, “birthlessness”, and so on do not stand for anything positive. A positive attribute (*bhāvarūpa-dharma*) should be reckoned as something different from the substance in which it inheres, but not so a negative attribute. If “bliss” is interpreted as a positive attribute of Brahman, it leads to dualism, for in addition to

21. See *BS*, Part II, p. 11.

22. *BS*, Part I, p. 3 : “*śabdapramāṇake ca yathāśabdaṁ pratipattir-yuktā.*”

23. *BS*, Part I, p. 3 : “*tasmāt pratyātmavedaniya-sukhapratyākhyānamayuktam.*”

Brahman there is bliss which is its attribute. If it is explained as a negative attribute (*abhāvarūpa-dharma*) indicating absence of misery in Brahman, there is no scope for dualism. It is, therefore, argued that the word "bliss", which occurs in *śruti*, texts, may be interpreted as a negative attribute of Brahman without prejudice to non-dualism.<sup>24</sup> Two other reasons are given in support of this view. The *śruti* text, "Brahman is knowledge and bliss,"<sup>25</sup> should be interpreted in accordance with the central thesis of non-dualism. Brahman which is one cannot have twofold nature. It cannot be of the nature of knowledge as well as of the nature of bliss. To say that Brahman has dual nature or form is to invite dualism. This difficulty will not arise if "bliss" is interpreted as a negative attribute of Brahman. Just as the word "not-gross" in the *śruti* text, "Neither gross, nor fine, nor short..."<sup>26</sup> refers to the absence of grossness in Brahman, even so the word "bliss" means absence of misery in Brahman. So the *śruti* text which says that "Brahman is knowledge and bliss", according to this explanation, refers to the absence of misery in Brahman which is of the nature of knowledge. Further, the words "knowledge" and "bliss" convey two different meanings. If they convey the same meaning, two words are unnecessary in the same *śruti* text. How can there be oneness (*ekatvam*) when two different positive aspects are conveyed by these two words? This difficulty, it is claimed, can be overcome if the word "bliss" is explained as a negative attribute of Brahman.<sup>27</sup>

This interpretation, says Maṇḍana, is wrong. When we say, "The sun is excellent and bright,"<sup>28</sup> the words

24. *BS*, Part I, p. 4.

25. *BU*, III, ix, 28.

26. *BU*, III, viii, 8.

27. *BS*, Part I, p. 5.

28. "prakṛṣṭaḥ prakāśaḥ savitā."

“excellent” and “bright” are not synonyms. Nevertheless, the excellence in the sun is not different from its brightness; nor is brightness different from its excellence. The two words are intended to convey a remarkable brightness of the sun. Similarly the words “bliss” and “knowledge” which occur in the *śruti* text are not synonyms. Nevertheless, knowledge in this case is not different from bliss; and bliss too is not different from knowledge. The two words are intended to convey the sense that Brahman is knowledge highest, bliss highest. So the *śruti* text, “Brahman is knowledge and bliss,”<sup>29</sup> does not mean that Brahman has dual nature; on the contrary, it conveys the sense that knowledge highest is bliss *par excellence* and that Brahman is knowledge and bliss. Since the positive sense of the word “bliss” as conveyed by the *śruti* text holds good, there is no need to explain it as a negative attribute of Brahman. Since Brahman is *nirguṇa*, it is as much free from negative attributes as it is from positive attributes.

There are reasons in support of the view that bliss or happiness is positive and not negative. The empirical pleasure (*laukikānanda*) is only a particularization of the highest bliss (*paramānanda*). The latter, of which empirical pleasure is only a fragment, should be conceived positively and not negatively. Only a positive category admits of specification and determination. The more and the less are possible only in the case of a positive category. Only if the highest bliss is positive in nature (*bhāva-rūpa*), the view that empirical pleasure is a particularization of the highest bliss is tenable. Moreover, we speak of grades of happiness, and this will be possible only if happiness is positive in character. There can be no gradations with regard to non-existence. Brahman or the Self is bliss, because it is the seat of supreme love. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says: “The

self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost."<sup>30</sup> Yājñavalkya argues that husband, wife, progeny, wealth, etc. are dear for the sake of the Self and not because of any intrinsic value in themselves, for all of them subserve the purpose of the Self.<sup>31</sup> There is also the evidence of experience in support of this. For all creatures including the smallest insects, the Self is dear. The love of one's own Self is nowhere more evident and better expressed than in the desire of every creature, "Let me not go out of existence; let me live for ever." This love of the Self is intelligible only if the Self is the locus of felicity. The Self is dear to everyone, because it is of the nature of bliss. If it is not of the nature of bliss, our attitude towards it would be different. A person is averse to that which causes unhappiness and indifferent to that which causes neither happiness nor unhappiness. But he is interested in, and attracted by, that which is the source of happiness and seat of felicity.<sup>32</sup>

With a view to show that bliss is self-luminous, let us first consider some of the objections raised with regard to our knowledge of bliss. If Brahman or the Self is bliss, it is asked whether bliss is known or not known. If it is known, then it is different from the knower, and so there arises dualism. In that case, grammatical co-ordination (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) between the self or knower and bliss as stated in the *śruti* text, "Brahman is bliss,"<sup>33</sup> (*ānandaṁ brahma*) is not tenable. Nor can they be related as substance and attribute. If bliss is an attribute of the knowing self or Brahman, there arises dualism, because an attribute is different from that in

30. BU, I, iv, 8.

31. BU, IV, v, 6.

32. BS, Part I, p. 5.

33. BU, III, ix, 28.



which it inheres as its attribute. If it be said with a view to avoid these difficulties that bliss is not cognizable even though it exists, its existence is as good as its non-existence; it would, indeed, cease to be a value worthy of attainment. In short, according to this argument, if bliss is known, dualism is inevitable, and if it cannot be known at all, it ceases to be a value sought after by a person.<sup>34</sup>

The objections raised above can be answered if first of all we consider the problem of cognition and then of the knower. Is cognition, Maṇḍana asks, known or not known? It cannot be said that cognition is not known. Like light, it manifests other objects and also illumines itself. An object is said to be known when there is neither doubt (*saṁśaya*) about its nature, nor erroneous cognition (*viparyaya*) of it. For example, when we determine the nature of the object in front to be such-and-such without any doubt whether it is a shell or silver, or when we do not mistake it for something else, we say that the object is known. In the same way, cognition manifests itself at the time of revealing the object with the result that we have neither doubt about it nor mistaken awareness of it as soon as it takes place. If cognition were not known at the time when it reveals the object, then one would either doubt or deny one's cognition soon after knowing an object. But no one doubts or denies in this manner. Though it cannot be said that cognition is not known, there are, however, difficulties in holding the view that cognition is known. If cognition is known, it becomes an object of cognition. But there is no evidence for a cognition revealing another cognition as its object. Further, if one cognition in order to be known requires another cognition, it will lead to infinite regress, for the second cognition in its turn will require a third cognition

34. *BS*, Part I, pp. 3-4.

to be revealed by it, and so on. So Maṇḍana concludes that the answer to the question whether cognition is known or not known must be that it is both known and not known : it is known, because it is self-luminous ; and it is not known, because, unlike other objects, it is not an object of cognition.<sup>35</sup>

Is the self, the knower, known or not known? It cannot be said that the knower is not known. If the knower is not known, cognition itself is not possible. Further, the knower has relation with the object known and the resulting cognition. When we say, "This is known by me," it is obvious that the knower is related to a certain object and also the resulting cognition. If the knower is not known, the twofold relation of the knower is not possible. Such a relation, however, is necessary. In the absence of a such a relation there will be no difference between one's cognition and another person's cognition. Though we have to say that the self, the knower, is not unknown, there is nevertheless difficulty in holding the view that it is known. If it is known, it is different from the knower, for one and the same entity cannot be both the knower and the known at the same time in the same cognitive operation. If it is different from the knower, it must be insentient like a pot. Since it has to be admitted that the self, the knower, is known though it is not cognizable in the usual sense of the term, Maṇḍana concludes that the self-luminosity of the Self which is the knower is its cognizability.<sup>36</sup>

Maṇḍana answers the objections raised with regard to our knowledge of bliss in the light of what has been said above. Brahman is self-luminous. Bliss is not

35. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

36. *BS*, Part I, p. 4. "ātmaprakāśataiva tasya saṁvedyatā."

different from Brahman, because it constitutes the very nature of Brahman. Since Brahman is self-luminous, it is tantamount to saying that bliss is self-luminous. If we say that bliss is cognizable, it is because of its self-luminosity. It is not cognizable as an object of knowledge. So the charge that dualism arises, if bliss is known, does not hold good; also the objection that if bliss is not known it ceases to be a value is untenable, for being self-luminous it is cognizable.<sup>37</sup>

It may be argued that unalloyed happiness is nowhere experienced. Pleasure is always mixed with pain. No one experiences pleasure or pain alone; but everyone experiences both pleasure and pain. It follows, according to this argument, that the Advaita view of *mokṣa* or Brahman-realization as a state of unconditioned bliss is untenable. Maṇḍana rejects this argument on the ground that there is not even the slightest trace of misery in the state of release. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says: "Verily, Brahman is fearless. He who knows this becomes the fearless Brahman."<sup>38</sup> There can be no trace of fear in Brahman, for it is incompatible with bliss which constitutes the nature of Brahman. It is wellknown that where there is fear there is no happiness, for fear is the source of suffering and sorrow. A state of bliss is free from fear, and therefore free from sorrow and pain. It cannot be said that though fear is not inherent in Brahman it may be caused by an agent yet to come, for there is no second to Brahman. Fear is engendered by the thought and presence of the other. It disappears when one realizes that there is nothing else besides Brahman-Ātman of which one has to be afraid.

37. BS, Part I, p. 4: "*tathā brahmaṇaḥ svātmaprakāśasyānandasvabhāvo na sāmvedyaḥ, karmatvābhāvāt. na ca asaṁvedyaḥ, svaprakāśatvāt.*"

38. IV, iv, 25.

That is why the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says, "Assuredly, it is from a second that fear arises."<sup>39</sup> Brahman, the ultimate reality, is non-dual; hence it is unconditioned, infinite bliss. The state of *mokṣa* or Brahman-realization is not a mixture of pleasure and pain, but is pure bliss.<sup>40</sup>

## 3

The *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman is "one only without a second."<sup>41</sup> The advocates of plurality argue that *śruti* speaks of the ultimate reality as one in the figurative and not in the real sense. On the basis of such an interpretation they argue that plurality is real. This contention, Maṇḍana says, is wrong. According to Advaita, oneness alone is real, and plurality, wherever mentioned, is used figuratively. The world of plurality is not real as it is dependent on *māyā*. This is evident from the *Upaniṣad* which says: "Indra goes about in many forms through *māyā*."<sup>42</sup> Since the one reality appears as many due to *māyā*, it is wrong to say that oneness is used figuratively in *śruti* texts. On the contrary, the use of plurality alone is figurative, because plurality is not ultimately real. The *Upaniṣad* categorically denies plurality when it says: "In it there is no diversity."<sup>43</sup> Even the cognition of plurality is condemned by it, because it declares: "He (who sees diversity) goes from death to death."<sup>44</sup> If the oneness of reality spoken of in *śruti* is figurative, then plurality must be real. In that case, the condemnation

39. I, iv, 2.

40. BS, Part I, p. 21.

41. CU, VI, ii, 1.

42. BU, II, v, 19.

43. Ibid., IV, iv, 19.

44. Ibid.

of plurality by *śruti* is inconsistent. But *śruti* deprecates plurality. Further, since the cognition of plurality is erroneous, plurality is not real. That the pluralistic universe is not real is also shown in the *śruti* text, "(He) who sees diversity, as were, in it."<sup>45</sup> Maṇḍana remarks that the expression "as it were" (*iva*) in this text is to show that our perception of plurality is not real, but illusory.<sup>46</sup>

The *śruti* text which says that Being (*i.e.* Brahman) is "one only (*ekameva*), without a second (*advitīyam*)" conveys the idea that reality is one. The repetition of the same idea by the two expressions "*ekameva*" and "*advitīyam*" implies that there is no diversity at all. Maṇḍana observes that the indeclinable "*eva*" through its emphasis and "*advitīyam*" imply that reality which is one is free from difference *in toto*. Difference is of three kinds—*sajātīya*, *vi-jātīya*, and *svagata*. The difference, for example, between two trees belonging to the same class is called *sajātīya-bheda*. The difference between tree and a stone which belong to two different classes is known as *vi-jātīya-bheda*. *Svagata-bheda* is internal difference, say between the leaves and flowers of a tree. The word "*ekam*" excludes *sajātīya* and *svagata-bheda*, and "*advitīyam*" excludes *vi-jātīya-bheda*.<sup>47</sup> Brahman, the ultimate reality, is devoid of anything of a like kind or of a different kind, and has no internal differentiation, since all these are empirical distinctions. All differences without any exception are denied by the non-dual text, because differences, being empirical distinctions, are not ultimately real. Since oneness alone is real, it has to be

45. *Ibid.*

46. *BS*, Part I, p. 6.

47. See Ānandagiri's gloss on Śaṅkara's commentary on *CU*, VI, ii, 1.

said that reference to plurality is figurative. Hence the contention that oneness is used figuratively in *śruti* texts does not carry conviction.<sup>48</sup>

One of the arguments adduced in favour of plurality is based on the difference in the experience of pleasure and pain. While some are happy, others are sorrowful; and there is some order in the matter of experiencing pleasure and pain (*bhoga-vyavasthā*). The difference in the enjoyment of pleasure and pain, according to the advocates of plurality, is intelligible only if there is difference among the individuals. It follows, according to them, that plurality is real and that it cannot be denied.<sup>49</sup>

This argument is not convincing. One may readily grant that there does exist some order or principle in the matter of experiencing pleasure and pain; but it does not follow from this that the difference among the individuals is real, for it can be explained by means of illusory difference (*kalpita-bheda*). This explanation of difference offered by the Advaitin also finds a place in other systems like Dvaita Vedānta and Jainism which are pluralistic.

According to Dvaita Vedānta, though the jīva is atomic in size, it pervades the body through its quality of intelligence. When a person is completely immersed in the cool stream of the Ganges in the hot season, he experiences pleasure in the whole body. This is because of the fact that the jīva, according to Dvaita, pervades the body by its quality of intelligence. How do the Dvaitins explain the localized experience of pain in a particular part of the body, e.g. in the head or in the

48. *BS*, Part I, p. 6.

49. *BS*, Part I, p. 7.

feet? Being insentient, neither the head nor the feet can feel pain. It is only the jīva that experiences pleasure or pain. When there is pain in the head alone, there is the possibility of the same jīva experiencing pain in the foot also, as the intelligence pervades from head to foot. With a view to avoid this difficulty, the Dvaitins must say that since the intelligence delimited by the head remains in that portion alone, the jīva experiences pain only in that part, and that it is not felt in the foot where the intelligence is delimited by a different part. Here is an explanation in terms of illusory difference (*kalpita-bheda*) to account for the sensation of pain felt in one part of the body.

Jainism holds the view that the jīva is neither all-pervasive (*vibhu*) nor atomic (*aṇu*), but is of the size of the body (*śarīra-parimāṇa*) with which it is associated in the empirical condition. It means that the jīva has dimensions, and is capable of expansion and contraction. Though the jīva is simple and devoid of parts, it pervades the body through the lustre of intelligence. It is an agent (*kartā*) as well as an experient (*bhoktā*). When there is pain in one part of the body, one should complain, on this view, of pain in the whole body, because the jīva pervades the whole organism. On the contrary, one complains that one's head or some other part is aching. It is not possible to account for this by suggesting that a particular part experiences pain, for it is the jīva rather than a part of the physical body which is the enjoyer. The only explanation that will hold good will be in terms of illusory difference between the intelligence delimited by one part, e.g. head, where the pain is felt and the intelligence delimited by another part where pain is not felt.<sup>50</sup>

Though the Self is one and all-pervasive according to Advaita, the experience of one jīva is not felt by another. Just as the Dvaitins and the Jainas argue that one part of the body does not experience the feeling of pain of another part of the same body, even so Advaita holds the view that one jīva does not experience the feelings of another jīva, even though the Self is one and infinite. According to Advaita, the diversity in the experience of pleasure and pain among the jīvas can be explained in terms of illusory difference due to the internal organ *antaḥkāraṇa* which is the limiting adjunct (*upādhi*). Maṇḍana drives home the point by an illustration. When a face is reflected in a jewel, a sword, and a mirror, one sees difference in colour, shape, size, etc., in the images of the face reflected in the three different media,, notwithstanding the fact that the original of the three images is the same. The difference in colour, shape, size, etc., which one notices in the images is not due to the original, but to the peculiar features of the medium in which the original is reflected. Conditioned as it is by the difference in the medium which is the *upādhi*, it is not real. Similarly, the difference in the internal organ, which is the *upādhi*, is responsible for the difference among the jīvas in their experience of pleasure and pain. The view that one jīva does not experience the feelings of another jīva, although the Self is one and all-pervasive, is well within the bounds of reason and logic.<sup>51</sup>

It is no argument to say that the difference between the liberated soul and one in bondage (*mukta-saṃsāri-vibhāga*) proves that difference among the jīvas is real. The explanation given earlier for the difference among the jīvas in the experience of pleasure and pain also holds good here. The happiness or misery of a jīva is



due to the nature of the internal organ which serves as its limiting adjunct. The purity or otherwise of the limiting adjunct accounts for the happiness or misery of the *jīva* in its empirical condition. The face appears to be defiled when it is reflected in a mirror which is not clean; and it is pure if the mirror is pure. In the absence of mirror, the face is free from the merits and demerits of the mirror. In the same way, a *jīva* becomes liberated from the pleasant and unpleasant experiences of bondage when it is no more under the influence of the limiting adjuncts. So it is not possible, says Maṇḍana, to establish the reality of difference on the ground that there is difference between a liberated soul and one in bondage.<sup>52</sup>

The advocates of plurality argue that the knower-known relation proves the reality of difference. According to them, the knower is inferred from the known, because the latter implies that there is a knower different from it; and this difference between the knower and the known cannot be denied. Secondly, the capacity to know or the power of manifestation (*dr̥kchakṭi*) inherent in the Self, the knower, implies the existence of external objects. Objects should be there in the world in order to be revealed as existing by the power of manifestation inherent in the knower. Since the knower cannot be the object of its own cognitive operation, the object known must be different from the knower. In the absence of external objects, there will be no need for the cognitive operation; consequently the power of manifestation of the knower, having no work to do, will become futile. The advocates of plurality, therefore, argue that the knower-known relation conclusively proves the reality of difference.<sup>53</sup>

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

The arguments stated above are not satisfactory. First of all, it is wrong to say that the knower is inferred from the known. To say that the knower has to be inferred from the known means that the existence of the knower is not posited as the prior condition of the knowledge of objects; if so, it will not be possible to prove the existence of external objects at all. Secondly, the very process of inferring the knower from the known presupposes the knower. Since the knower which is to be proved is assumed in the very process of proof, the argument is vitiated by the fallacy of *petitio principii*. According to Advaita, though the Self, the knower, is not cognizable like a tree or table, it does not remain unknown, for being self-luminous by its very nature, it does not require to be made known at all. Since its presence in all acts of cognition is equivalent to its revelation, it is never missed. Thirdly, the admission of the power of manifestation inherent in the Self or the knower does not require the admission of the existence of objects outside the knower. Just as a lamp reveals itself, so also the Self, the knower, reveals itself by its power of manifestation. Just as the power of illumination which a lamp possesses does not imply the existence of objects, even so the power of manifestation of the knower does not imply the existence of objects outside it.<sup>54</sup>

The knower-known relation, far from lending support to the reality of difference, indeed, undermines it. The very fact that an object is known confirms the relation between the knower and the known. Things that are related are not different. Since the knower and the known are related, they cannot be different. If they are different, no relation between them is possible. It may be stated here that, according to Advaita, the Self, the knower, illusorily appears as the manifold objects of

sense; and so the latter are not different from the former.<sup>55</sup>

It may be argued that, though the knower and the known are different, they are nevertheless related by the internal organ (*antaḥkāraṇa*). This argument, Maṇḍana says, is of no avail. The internal organ cannot really bring together the knower which is consciousness and the object which is its opposite. The Self, the knower, which is sentient, does not bear any relation with an insentient object.<sup>56</sup>

Let us consider in this connection the part played by the internal organ in respect of the cognition of objects. The internal organ, like a search light, goes out and assumes the form of the object. Owing to its proximity to the Self which is sentient, the internal organ gets the reflection of the Self, and thereby the modification (*vr̥tti*) which it undergoes gets illumined. When the modification of the internal organ is illumined, we say that the object is cognized. Though insentient, the internal organ, which carries the reflection of the Self, is credited with the power of revealing objects. The Self which is consciousness does not undergo any change. Nor is it affected by the modifications of the internal organ. It may be urged that this explanation of the role of the internal organ in the perception of an object proves the difference between the knower and the known. This explanation, too, does not lend support to the reality of difference between the knower and the known. Maṇḍana asks: what is meant by "getting the reflection" of the sentient Self by the internal organ? It can only mean

55. See S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, "The Self in relation to Knowledge," *Collected Papers*, Ed. T. M. P. Mahadevan, University of Madras, 1961, pp. 197-200.

56. *BS*, Part I, p. 8.

that the internal organ which is insentient by its very nature appears to be sentient; i.e. it is *adhyāsa* which is illusory (*mithyā*).<sup>57</sup> The internal organ which does not by its very nature possess the power to reveal objects appears to have, or is credited with, that power due to its proximity to the sentient Self. How, then, can it be maintained that objects are really seen and that they are different from the knower on the basis of the work of the internal organ whose relation with the Self is *mithyā*?<sup>58</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas argue in a different way to show that the knower and the known are different. When a cognition arises in the self relating it to an object, the object becomes "illuminated" or "known" thereby; that is, the object is characterized by the new feature of being illuminated or known. The Mīmāṃsakas, therefore, refer to the "knownness" of an object. Further, when we see an object which is blue, we say, "This object is blue;" we do not say, "I am blue." The fact that we do not say, "I am blue", shows that the object known is different from the knower. It means that there are objects outside the knower, and that the knower and the known are different.<sup>59</sup> This argument too, Maṇḍana says, does not prove the difference between the knower and the known. The Advaitin admits that cognition, being transitive, points to an object outside it.<sup>60</sup> Ordinarily we say on the basis of our experience that the

57. *Ibid.* : "atha keyam tacchāyatā? atadātmanastadavabhāsaḥ."

58. *Ibid.*

59. See BS, Part II, p. 27 : "darśanam ca 'nīlamidam' iti vyatiriktaṁ nīlamupasthāpayati, na 'aham nīlam' ityavyatiriktaṁ; ato draṣṭṛvyatiriktaṁ dṛśyamiti."

60. The transitive or relational nature of cognition is *aupādhika* and not *svābhāvika*.

object known is different from the knower. Maṇḍana remarks that this experience is analogous to the act of seeing one's own face in a mirror. Just as the image of the face reflected in a mirror is taken to be different from its original while in reality it is not, even so the manifold objects of sense are thought of to be different from the Self, the knower, while in truth they are not. The one reality, viz the Self which is consciousness, illusorily appears as the many. That the manifold objects of sense are not different from the Self, is well brought out by the *śruti* text: "When, verily, the Self is seen, heard, reflected on, and known, then all this is known."<sup>61</sup>

That the world of plurality is real, is argued on the ground that Brahman or the Self which is real is of the nature of the things of the world (*prapañcātmakam*). The *Chāndogya* text which says, "He who is of the nature of space, containing all works, containing all desires, . . . encompassing this whole world . . . is the Self,"<sup>62</sup> is cited in support of this view. The evidence of postulation (*arthāpatti*), it is further claimed, also confirms this. The objects of the world by their very nature are insentient and cannot reveal themselves. Nevertheless, they reveal themselves and are known. In order to remove the inconsistency which is involved here, we must assume that Brahman-Ātman which is self-luminous consciousness is in the form of the objects of the world. Only by such an assumption can our knowledge of the things of the world be made intelligible.<sup>63</sup>

It is wrong to say that Brahman is of the nature of the things of the phenomenal world. The *śruti* text quoted above does not purport to establish the pheno-

61. BU, IV, v, 6.

62. III, xiv, 8.

63. BS, Part I, p. 19.

menal nature of Brahman. There are, in fact, *śruti* texts which deny the phenomenal nature of Brahman. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, for example, says that Brahman is "neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long . . ." <sup>64</sup> and thereby denies the identity of Brahman with the objects of the world. Moreover, the acceptance of this view would lead to absurdities. If Brahman were to be equated with the things of the world, there would be no release at all from bondage, for the world, being no other than Brahman, would be permanent. Again, if Brahman were of the nature of the world of hunger and thirst, no one would think in terms of release from such a world. There is yet another difficulty. Since Brahman, according to this argument, is already in the world, the idea of release is meaningless. It is, therefore, wrong to say that Brahman is identical with the things of the phenomenal world. If, on the contrary, we say that the world of plurality is an illusory appearance of Brahman due to *avidyā*, not only can we escape from the absurdities stated above, but also we can account for the perception of plurality and the alleged difference among the *jīvas*. Just as a rope appears as a snake, even so the One appears as the many. The perception of plurality is due to *avidyā*. The pluralistic universe is an error of judgment. Since the difference among the *jīvas* is due to *avidyā*, it is intelligible to say that one becomes liberated when *avidyā* is destroyed, and that another is in bondage because of the persistence of *avidyā*. While Brahman, the non-dual reality, is absolutely real, the world of plurality is empirically real. That is why Maṇḍana says that Brahman is *asarvaṃ*, i.e. Brahman is not of the nature of the phenomenal world. So the equation of the One real with the many phenomenal is untenable. The phenomenal world is the play of the inscrutable *avidyā*. <sup>65</sup>

64. III, viii, 8.

65. *BS*, Part I, p. 20.

If the world of plurality which is a projection of *avidyā* is not real, what, then, is real? The 'void' (*śūnya*) is the answer given by the *Śūnyavādin*, i.e. the emptiness or voidness of the world (*prapañcā - śūnyatā*), according to him, is real. Since the *Upaniṣad* speaks of Brahman as real (*satyam*), the Brahman of the Advaitin, the *Śūnyavādin* argues, is no other than the void. He also tries to justify this on the ground that the *Upaniṣad*, whose authority is acceptable to the Advaitin, describes Brahman by emptying it of the things of the world, for the *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman is "not this, not this,"<sup>66</sup> and that it is "neither gross nor fine, nor short nor long..."<sup>67</sup>

The *Śūnyavādin* is thoroughly mistaken when he identifies Brahman with the void. According to Advaita, Brahman is not of the nature of the phenomenal world. But it does not follow from this that Brahman should be equated with the emptiness or voidness of the world. When Advaita says that Brahman is not of the nature of the phenomenal world, it is with a view to emphasize the idea that Brahman is different from the phenomenal world.<sup>68</sup> It has already been shown why Brahman, the absolutely real, cannot be equated with the phenomenal world, which is empirically real. While Brahman is not of the nature of the phenomenal world, the phenomenal world is dependent on Brahman. While Brahman is not all this that we see and enjoy, "all this" is Brahman. When Advaita says that "all this" is Brahman, it is to bring out the dependence of the world of plurality on Brahman. There can be no appearance without a substratum. In illusion something appears as something else. The rope appears as a snake; and when the illusion is over and the snake is no more, what remains is the rope.

66. BU, III, ix, 26.

67. BU, III, viii, 8.

Since the world of plurality is an illusory appearance of Brahman, when the illusion is over and the world is no more seen, what remains is Brahman. Just as the rope, the substratum, is different from the absence of the illusory snake, even so Brahman, the substratum, is different from the absence of the illusory world. So there is no justification for the view that Brahman is identical with the emptiness or absence of the world of plurality.

There are other reasons to show why the argument of the Śūnyavādin is not acceptable. If the void is the ultimate reality. Then it is always attained without any effort; and this would result in eternal release, ruling out the need for Scriptural teaching and human effort for attaining release. Moreover, subscribing as he does to the doctrine of the void, the Śūnyavādin cannot consistently maintain that bondage is due to *avidyā*. In this connection Maṇḍana refers to the two ways, negative and positive, in which *avidyā* may be understood; and neither of them is helpful to the Śūnyavādin. *Avidyā*, if understood negatively as non-apprehension, cannot be the cause of bondage, for non-apprehension is *abhāva*, and *abhāva* cannot be the cause of anything. If *avidyā* is interpreted as mis-apprehension, the contention that the void is the reality will not hold good. Mis-apprehension means that one object is mistaken for something else. If so, the positive conception of *avidyā* shows the untenability of the doctrine of the void.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the *Upaniṣad* does not lend support to the standpoint of the Śūnyavādin. A text of the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* says: "All this (world) is filled up by the Self."<sup>70</sup>

68. BS, Part I, p. 20: "brahmāṇo na sarvātmatā; sarvaṁ tu brahmātmakam, brahmarūpeṇa rūpavat."

69. See BS, Part II, p. 56: "atha viparyayagrahaṇamavidyā, tatstasya sattābhyupagamāt na sarvaśūnyatā."

70. X, 4.



Declaring that "The Self, indeed, is all this world,"<sup>71</sup> the *Chāndogya* conveys the idea that the Self, the non-dual reality, is everywhere. *Śruti*, moreover, directly denies that the void is the reality when it says, "How could being (*sat*) be produced from non-being (*asat*)?"<sup>72</sup> The *Upaniṣad* speaks of the ultimate reality as of the nature of knowledge and bliss.<sup>73</sup> Since *abhāva* cannot have any nature or form, the ultimate reality cannot be the void or total nothing.

Erroneous perception of onething as something else cannot take place without a substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and *avidyā*. Owing to *avidyā*, a rope, which is the substratum, is perceived as a snake. If the void is the reality, how does the *Śūnyavādin* account for the appearance of *saṃsāra*? Though he admits *avidyā*, there is no object for him to play the role of a substratum. The void which is a nullity cannot be the substratum for the appearance of *saṃsāra*. We know that there is *saṃsāra*; and the void of the *Śūnyavādin*, just because it is the void, cannot be the substratum. If so, the *Śūnyavādin* has to say that *saṃsāra* floats in the mid-air, unanchored and uncaused. Such a conclusion is hardly satisfactory to the demands of reason. So Brahman which is the Absolute of Advaita is not the void. It is not to be equated with the emptiness of the world (*prapañca-śūnyatā*). It is the trans-empirical all of which the empirical world is an appearance due to *avidyā*.<sup>74</sup>

## 4

According to Advaita, Brahman or the Self is of the nature of knowledge. The *Upaniṣad* says that "The Self

71. CU, VII, xxv, 2.

72. CU, VI, ii, 2.

73. BU, III, ix, 28-7.

74. BS, Part I, p. 20.

is Brahman,"<sup>75</sup> and that "Brahman is real, knowledge, and infinite."<sup>76</sup>

It is necessary in this connection to refer to the Nyāya view of the self as well as the Nyāya criticism of the Advaita view of the Self. According to Nyāya, knowledge is a separable or adventitious attribute of the self which is a unique substance: *i.e.* the self is not knowledge by its very nature, but is a substance having knowledge as its separable attribute. The self is an eternal entity which is connected with a body suitable to its desert. Knowledge arises only when the self is related to the *manas* which through the senses comes into contact with the object outside. The co-operation of *manas* is a necessary condition of knowledge. In its disembodied condition, the self, according to Nyāya, will have no knowledge. Release, according to this system, is the state of the self when it remains free from all attributes including knowledge.

The Advaita view of the Self is not acceptable to the Naiyāyika. Being eternal, infinite, self-luminous consciousness, the Self, the Naiyāyika argues, must always be cognizant of all the objects of the world even without any instrument of knowledge. If so, the Self must be related to, and have the experience of, the innumerable objects of the world even in the state of release. This would place the Self in infinite bondage, a position that is hardly desirable. In order to obviate this difficulty it could be argued that the Self does not know anything in the state of *mokṣa*. Such a contention, the Naiyāyika says, will not be helpful to the Advaitin. If the Self does not know anything, it ceases to be of the nature of knowledge, a position which is equally unwel-

75. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, II.

76. *TU*, II, i, 1.

come to the Advaitin. The Advaitin is thus placed on the horns of a dilemma: if the Self has knowledge of things in *mokṣa*, it is still in the state of bondage; and if it does not have knowledge of things, it is not of the nature of knowledge. These difficulties, according to the Naiyāyika, will not arise if knowledge is treated as an attribute of the Self, which is insentient by its very nature.<sup>77</sup>

Maṇḍana says that the alleged difficulties in the Advaita position are more apparent than real. Though the Self is eternal, infinite, self-luminous consciousness, it cognizes objects and experiences pleasure and pain only when it is associated with the mind, the senses, and the body. Determinate knowledge of anything can arise only when the Witness-self or the *Sākṣin*, which is consciousness,<sup>78</sup> is in relation with the internal organ. The Self in its empirical condition can be conscious of objects only through the functioning of the mind and senses. In the waking state it experiences objects through the mind and the senses. Though the senses do not function in dream, it nevertheless experiences objects through the work of the mind. It means that the Self in its empirical condition cognizes only those objects which are presented to it through the instruments such as the mind and the senses. Maṇḍana drives home the point by presenting an analogous case. Fire which has the capacity to burn burns only those objects which can be burnt and which come into contact with it. No one denies the burning capacity of fire just because an object which cannot be burnt or which is not in contact with it is not consumed by it. Similarly, though the Self is eternal, infinite, self-luminous consciousness, it does not follow that it is conscious of all the objects of the world. It

77. *BS*, Part I, p. 15.

78. The words "knowledge" and "consciousness" are used as synonyms.

can cognize only those objects with which it comes into contact through the mind and the senses. Release, according to Advaita, is the realization of the non-dual nature of the Self; and in this state there is no second entity which the Self can be conscious of. If so, how is it possible for the Self which is knowledge or consciousness to be related to, and have the experience of, the objects of the world? Though it is not conscious of anything as there are no objects to be seen in *mokṣa*, it does not cease to be of the nature of knowledge. So the Nyāya criticism of the Advaita conception of the Self does not hold good. In fact, the same criticism may be levelled against the Nyāya theory of the self. The Naiyāyika holds the view that the self is all-pervading and eternal and that the *manas* which is atomic and eternal is the instrument of knowing. The self comes to have knowledge as a result of its contact with the *manas*. It can be urged against the Naiyāyika that, since the self according to him is omnipresent, it must needs be in association with every *manas* and not necessarily with one only, with the result that it must know all the objects and must undergo all the experiences at the same time. The Naiyāyika, however, does not draw this conclusion. He maintains that its field of knowledge and range of experience are restricted by its association with its own *manas* and not with all. If the Naiyāyika would invoke *karma* to explain why the self through its contact with *manas* cognizes only certain objects and is subject to a particular kind of experience, the same explanation holds good even for the Advaitin.

The cognition of the world of diversity is due to *avidyā*. When there is the realization of the non-dual Self, there is no more the world of plurality to be presented to the Self, for *avidyā* which projects the appearance of the world ceases to exist as soon as the saving knowledge arises. Just as fire does not lose its

nature, *viz* the burning capacity, even though there are no objects to be burnt, even so the Self which is the seer does not lose its nature, *viz* the capacity to reveal objects, just because the objects to be seen do not exist. That is why the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says: "There is no cessation of the seeing of the seer, because it is imperishable. There is not, however, a second, nothing else separate from it which it could see."<sup>79</sup> The same idea is brought out in another passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*: "When there is duality as it were, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other...one knows the other. But when everything has become just one's own Self, by what and whom should one see, by what and whom should one smell...by what and whom should one know?"<sup>80</sup>

It may be stated here that the Nyāya conception of *mokṣa* reduces itself to an absurdity. If *mokṣa* is a state of the self when it remains as a pure substance free from all special qualities including knowledge, there is, Maṇḍana remarks, nothing to distinguish such a state from *abhāva* or non-existence of the self. The Naiyāyika proves the adventitious nature of knowledge by citing dreamless sleep, where the self is supposed to endure as a pure substance without the characteristic of knowledge. This argument, however, is not satisfactory. If the Self is not conscious of anything, subjective or objective, during dreamless sleep, it is because of the absence of the internal organ at that time. When a person wakes up from dreamless sleep, he has the recollection (*smṛti*) to the effect that he was not aware of anything at that time; and this recollection testifies to the fact that the Self as consciousness must

79. IV, iii, 23.

80. IV, v, 15.

have been there at that time as the witness to the absence of everything. Since there is no evidence to show that the Self can remain without consciousness, it cannot mean anything but the extinction of the Self, if the Self were to exist without consciousness in *mokṣa*. No one, observes Maṇḍana, would be desirous of the *abhāva* or non-existence of the Self which is of the nature of unsurpassed bliss. If *mokṣa* is the *abhāva* of the Self—and it cannot be anything but that in the Nyāya position—it ceases to be the highest value, the goal of human endeavour. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Nyāya view of the Self.<sup>81</sup>

## 5

Brahman, the ultimate reality, is *akṣaram*, i.e. it is of the nature of Sound (*śabdātmakam*), because the *Upaniṣad* establishes the identity of the mystic sound, *Om* or *Praṇava*, with Brahman. "That which is the sound *Om*," says the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, "is verily the higher and the lower Brahman."<sup>82</sup> The point to be noted here is that the sound *Om*, according to this text, is not indicative of Brahman; it is Brahman itself. The reason is that the termination "*kāra*" occurring in a word refers to the preceding letter or word, and has its purport in what precedes it, and not in the object which the word refers to.<sup>83</sup> For example, when we ask, "What for is the word 'only' (*evakāraḥ*)?" the termination "*kāra*" has its purport in the preceding word, viz "*eva*". Similarly in the *śruti* text cited above, the termination "*kāra*" refers to the sound *Om* which precedes it, because it has its purport in the preceding word. So the *Praśna Upaniṣad* teaches the

81. *BS*, Part I, p. 16.

82. V, 2.

83. See *Vyākaraṇa-vārtika*, III, iii, 108.

identity of *Om* with Brahman. It is true that the *Upaniṣad* in certain places teaches meditation on *Om* as Brahman, for it is difficult to meditate on Brahman which is devoid of attributes without some image or symbol as an aid. Just as a piece of wood or stone which is a symbol of a deity is worshipped as if it were the deity, even so Brahman is to be meditated upon by means of *Om*, since it is the name for Brahman. For example, the *Muṇḍaka* text, "Meditate on *Om* as the Self,"<sup>84</sup> recommends meditation on *Om* as Brahman. It is wrong to conclude from this that *Om* is commended for meditation in all places. According to Maṇḍana, if a *śruti* text purports to bring out the nature of *Om* without commending it for meditation, it must be interpreted as teaching the identity of *Om* with Brahman. Besides the *Praśna Upaniṣad* to which reference has already been made, there are other *śruti* texts which teach the identity of *Om* with Brahman. A text of the *Taittiriya* says: "*Om* is Brahman; *Om* is this all."<sup>85</sup> Again, the *Chāndogya* declares: "Just as all leaves are permeated by the stalk, even so is all speech permeated by *Om*. Verily, the syllable *Om* is all this."<sup>86</sup>

Maṇḍana argues that the *Chāndogya* text cited above conveys that *Om* which is all-comprehensive and all-pervasive is the underlying principle of all. The beginning (*upakrama*) and the end (*upasamhāra*) of the passage will have to be considered in order to understand the significance of this text. It is said in the beginning that *Om* is the underlying principle of all speech (*vāk*); and the passage concludes by saying that speech is the underlying reality of the world of objects. All speech is permeated and is held together by *Om*, because the latter

84. II, ii, 6.

85. I, viii, 1.

86. II, xxiii, 3.

uniformly follows all speech, and its invariable association with speech is never given up. That which is ever present in a thing constitutes its nature. Clay is ever present in objects such as pot, pan, mug, and so on, which are made of clay; and its invariable association with them is never given up. Hence we conclude that clay constitutes the nature of these objects, *i.e.* clay is the underlying reality (*tattva*) of these objects. There are two steps in the scriptural argument which seeks to show that "*Om* is all this". First of all, since the sound *Om* is ever present in speech, it is the underlying principle of the latter. Secondly, the knowledge of the things of the world takes place in association with speech. When we cognize a thing and say "This is a pot", our knowledge reveals the invariable association of speech with the object known. Never does the knowledge of an object take place without the object revealing its invariable association with speech. Since the world of objects does not give up its relation with speech, the latter constitutes the reality of the former. Thus, the *Chândogya* text purports to show (1) that the reality of the world of objects is speech, and (2) that the reality of speech is the sound *Om*. So it concludes that the syllable *Om* is all this. After establishing that *Om* is the underlying reality of all, the *Upaniṣad* identifies *Om* with Brahman: *Om* is Brahman, because all this is Brahman, and *Om* is all this.<sup>87</sup>

Not only does *śruti* say that *Om* is the self or the underlying principle of all things, but it also says that Speech (*vāk*) is the self of all. Consider the following *śruti* text which Maṇḍana quotes: "Speech caused the entire universe; it is Speech that enjoyed it—so Speech

87. See *BS*, Part I, p. 17.



said."<sup>88</sup> This text conveys the idea that the universe which is brought into being by Speech is not different from it. Since it is said that speech enjoyed it, the *jīva* who is the experient is really non-different from Speech. Again, in the *Vāksūkta* Speech declares: "I move as Rudras and Vasus."<sup>89</sup> According to Maṇḍana, what is evident from these texts is that Speech is the ultimate reality, that it is the self of all, and that it is, therefore, Brahman.

The scriptural view that Speech is the underlying principle of everything can be justified by means of reasoning also. Maṇḍana says that the world of objects is a transformation (*pariṇāma*) or a false appearance (*vivarta*) of Speech; for it is always in association with Speech, which is other than its class (*jāti*) and quality (*guṇa*), and whatever is in invariable association with anything other than its class and quality, is only a transformation or a false appearance thereof.<sup>90</sup> The examples of a pot and an image will help us to understand this argument. A pot which is in invariable association with clay is a transformation of clay. An image (*pratibimba*) which is in invariable association with its original (*bimba*) is an illusory appearance thereof. In the same way, the world of objects which is in invariable association with Speech is a transformation or an illusory appearance thereof. The invariable association of the world of things with Speech will be obvious if we reflect on our knowledge of things. When we know a pot and express ourselves, "This is a pot," the association of the object with Speech is apparent. Since every object is known in invariable association with Speech, the object,

88. "vāgeva viśvā bhuvanāni jajñe vāgeva idaṁ bubhuje vāguvāca."

89. *Rg-vedasamhitā*, X, 125, 1.

90. See *BS*, Part II, p. 49.

whatever it may be, is said to be of the nature of Speech or Sound, in the same way as a pot which is always seen in invariable association with clay is said to be of the nature of clay. But for the association of Speech with objects, knowledge of objects is impossible.

Sound or Speech (*śabda*) is not just a means of knowing an object in the way in which perception and inference are. On the contrary, it constitutes the nature of object, and the object known is non-different from *śabda*. Maṇḍana adduces a number of arguments in support of this view. Let us first consider the difference between perceptual knowledge arising through the instrumentality of the visual sense, and the knowledge generated by *śabda*. Though the visual sense, given the necessary conditions of knowledge, gives rise to knowledge, it itself is not known at the time of the cognitive operation. Unlike the visual sense, *śabda* does not remain unknown when it gives rise to the knowledge of an object. When any object is known, it is referred to in the form of *śabda*. It means that *śabda* is also known when the object is known through *śabda*. If *śabda* is not known, the object can never be known at all. So *śabda* is something more than a means by which an object is known; it is what constitutes the nature of the object known.

Secondly, there is difference between knowing an object by means of inference and knowing it through *śabda*. For example, when we infer fire from smoke, the latter, unlike the visual sense which remains unknown at the time of the cognitive operation, is also known. The inferred object is different from the means through which it is inferred. This is easily seen when the inferential knowledge is expressed in language. We say: "From smoke (is inferred) fire" (*dhūmāt agniḥ*), and not "Smoke is fire" (*dhūmaḥ agniḥ*). Since the two words "*dhūmāt*" and "*agniḥ*" are not in grammatical co-ordination, the

objects denoted by them are different. If *śabda* were to be just a means like smoke to getting knowledge, there should be no grammatical co-ordination in the words. When we say, "This is a pot," the object known which is in front and which is denoted by the word "this" is non-different from *śabda* through which it is made known, for there is grammatical co-ordination between the two words. It is, therefore, wrong to think that *śabda* is just a means of knowing an object like perception and inference.

Thirdly, even in cases where knowledge arises through means other than *śabda*, the object is always known in association with *śabda*. The visual sense, for example, may enable us to know a pot; but the object is not known in association with the visual sense. The means, however useful, drops itself out, and we simply say, "This is a pot," without associating the means with the object known. But *śabda* comes to be associated with the object known, even though a different means started the whole process. In the case of inference also, the object is known in invariable association with *śabda*, and not in association with the means (e.g. the smoke) through which the object (*viz* fire) is known. Maṇḍana remarks that, if objects are known in invariable association with *śabda* even in those cases where knowledge arises through means other than *śabda*, *a fortiori* in the case of knowledge arising through *śabda*, the object is known in association with *śabda*.

There is yet another argument to show the non-difference between the object known and *śabda*. In the case of a lotus which is blue, the lotus (*utpalam*) and its blue colour (*nilam*) are related as substance and attribute. When we say, "The lotus is blue," the words "*nilam*" and "*utpalam*" are in grammatical co-ordination. Words by themselves cannot be related as substance and attribute

by being placed in grammatical co-ordination. On the other hand, only the things denoted by them can be related as substance and attribute. If we convey the relation of substance and attribute obtaining between lotus and the blue colour by means of words, which by themselves do not admit of any such relation, by placing them in grammatical co-ordination, it only means that *śabda* is non-different from the thing denoted by it. Just as clay through transformation appears as pot, pan, and other objects, even so *śabda* through transformation appears as the world of objects.<sup>91</sup>

The world of objects, Maṇḍana says, can also be shown to be an illusory appearance of *śabda*. Consider expressions such as "hare's horn" (*śaśaviṣāṇa*) whose meanings are clearly understood when they are uttered, even though there are no objects corresponding to them. Pseudo-objects like "hare's horn" are only in our empirical discourse (*vṛavahāra*); they do not exist in reality. Nevertheless, when some one uses the expression "hare's horn", it makes sense to us. And we know that, whereas the word "pot" when uttered by some one refers to an object which exists, the expression "hare's horn" speaks of something which does not really exist. The point to be noted here is that when from the expression "hare's horn" we get a mental image or a cognition of an object which does not really exist, there is nothing else in reality than *śabda*. This mental image or cognition corresponding to which there is no object is called *vikalpapratyaya*. Since *śabda* (e.g. *śaśaviṣāṇa*) that is uttered gives rise to the cognition of pseudo-objects like "hare's horn", the latter, according to Maṇḍana, are no other than the illusory appearances of *śabda*.

Maṇḍana analyses the nature of "prescriptions and prohibitions" (*vidhi-niṣedha*) and the "sentence - sense"

91. BS, Part I, p. 18.

(*vākyārtha*) in order to drive home his point. An injunction (*vidhi*) commands us to do a certain thing, while a prohibition (*niṣedha*) restrains us from doing a certain thing. While injunction has its purport in activity (*pravṛtti*), prohibition has its purport in abstinence from activity (*nivṛtti*). The meanings of the expressions "Do this" and "Don't do that" are no doubt intelligible. But what is the content (*viśaya*) of injunction and prohibition? What is that which is to be done or to be avoided as intimated by injunction and prohibition? One may try to answer this question in terms of time (*kāla*) or deed (*kārya*). Let us first consider the former alternative. Time is of three kinds—past, present, and future. Activity (*pravṛtti*) and abstinence from activity (*nivṛtti*) as intimated by injunction and prohibition cannot be with reference to the past. The past which is no more is not within the reach of the individual. So, that which is to be done or given up has nothing to do with the past. They cannot also be with reference to the present which is already in existence. Nor are they with reference to the future. It is well known that the events of the future are not subservient to the individual to be accomplished or to be given up by him. In short, the question: "What is the content of injunction and prohibition?" cannot be answered with reference to time. Nor does the second alternative fare better. It cannot be said that deed or action (*kārya*) is the content of injunction and prohibition, for deed as such does not exist apart from time; when we say "There *was* action, or there *is* action, or there *will be* action," the deed is not and cannot be thought of apart from time. Thus, the question, "What is the content of *vidhi* and *niṣedha*?" cannot be answered in terms of time and deed, which are the only possibilities. The reason for this is that there is no real content for *vidhi-niṣedha* in the same way as there is no real object corresponding to the expression "*śaśaviṣāṇa*". Nevertheless, just as the expression "*śaśaviṣāṇa*" is intelligible and conveys a certain

cognition, even so *vidhi* and *niṣedha* are meaningful and convey a certain cognition. As in the case of *śaśaviṣāṇa*, here also *śabda* that is uttered in the form of *vidhi* and *niṣedha* gives rise to a mental image or cognition known as *vikalpapratyaya* corresponding to which there is no real content. The mental image in these cases, according to Maṇḍana, is an illusory transformation (*vivarta*) of *śabda-tattva*, the reality which is Sound.<sup>92</sup>

An inquiry into the "sentence-sense" (*vākyārtha*) will show that what is called "sentence-sense" is an illusory appearance of *śabda*, which is the reality. A sentence is a combination of words. The words which constitute a sentence have their own distinct meanings. What they mean in combination with each other when they constitute a sentence is not different from what they mean individually. The combined words do not convey anything over and above what they convey individually. In short, apart from the meanings of words (*pādārtha*) which combine together in a particular way, the sentence-sense (*vākyārtha*) as such does not exist. Nevertheless, we take it that there is such a thing as sentence-sense different from the meanings of words; and we also claim that the knowledge we get from the meaning of a sentence cannot be obtained from the meanings of words taken individually. Maṇḍana says that *śabda*, the ultimate reality, illusorily appears as the sentence-sense, as if the latter were something different from the meanings of individual words.<sup>93</sup>

With a view to show that *śabda* is identical with knowledge, Maṇḍana first of all calls attention to the fact that knowledge becomes clear and definite only because of its association with *śabda*; and then he argues

92. *Ibid.*

93. *BS*, Part I, p. 19.

that knowledge does its work of manifesting objects effectively only because of its association with Sound. The first point needs a brief explanation. Even in those cases where knowledge is hazy and indefinite, there is undoubtedly the influence of *śabda*, though latent and subdued. A person is able to distinguish music from noise and appreciate it to some extent only because of the association of *śabda* with knowledge. Here the influence of *śabda* is, of course, subtle. But when its association with knowledge becomes manifest, the knowledge we get is clear and definite as seen in the case of a person who is well-versed in music and who has a clear knowledge of the different notes of the musical gamut. We may now consider the second point. One object can be distinguished from another only when *śabda* comes to be associated with it, and not otherwise. Cowherds give names to the cows which they tend, because they want to have a knowledge of them in such a way that they would be able to distinguish them from one another. If by knowing an object we cannot differentiate it from other things, it is as good as not knowing it. Such a knowledge is not worth the name. Knowledge reveals objects: and it does its work only when it comes to be associated with Sound. Knowledge is, therefore, dependent upon *śabda* for revealing objects. In the ultimate analysis, *śabda*, according to Maṇḍana is identical with knowledge, for it is the potency of *śabda* (*vākśakti*) that illumines objects.<sup>94</sup>

When Brahman is said to be *akṣaram*, it is not only to show that Brahman is of the nature of Sound and that the mystic sound *Om* is, therefore, identical with Brahman, but it is also for stressing the immutable nature of Brahman. Brahman, the absolutely real, does not change. An entity which is subject to change is

finite, transitory, and unreal. Brahman is infinite, eternal, and real, and so it is immutable. That Brahman is immutable has been stated in the *Upaniṣad*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says, "Brahman is unborn, great, and constant."<sup>95</sup> Brahman is the immutable substratum for the appearance of the mutable phenomena due to *avidyā*. There is no real transformation of Brahman into the phenomenal world, but only an *apparent* transformation (*vivarta*) of it into the manifold of experience.

It is not without reasoning that the *Upaniṣad* maintains that Brahman is immutable. The view that Brahman is mutable leads to several difficulties. If it be said that Brahman undergoes transformation, it is necessary to know whether the whole of Brahman is subject to change or only a part of it. If the entire Brahman were to change into the world of diversity, it would be tantamount to the destruction of Brahman of the nature of knowledge-bliss-infinitude. If Brahman, by losing its nature, were to become something else, it ceases to be permanent. One may think of objects such as gold and clay which undergo transformation without, however, losing their nature and remaining permanent.<sup>96</sup> But this does not hold in the case of Brahman. In the case of the actual transformation of Brahman into the world of name and form, the alteration of form is such that Brahman has to abandon its nature, for the world of plurality which is false, finite, and insentient is the opposite of Brahman which is real, infinite, and sentient. If it be said that only a part of Brahman undergoes change, then Brahman is not partless, but is a composite entity (*avayavin*). If Brahman is composite, it cannot be permanent, for no composite entities are permanent.

95. IV, iv, 20.

96. See *Mahābhāṣya*, I, i, 1.



There is also another difficulty here. Since the parts are different from one another and also from the composite substance, dualism is unavoidable, if Brahman were to be a composite entity. But the *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman is eternal, partless and non-dual. So the view that Brahman undergoes real transformation is not tenable.

Though immutable, Brahman due to *avidyā* illusorily appears as the world of plurality in the same way as a rope without undergoing any change appears as a snake. In the case where two entities are related as cause and effect through *vivarta*, e.g. rope and snake as well as Brahman and the world, the effect has a lower order of reality than that of the cause. The effect which is an illusory appearance of the cause does not affect the nature of the cause in any way. Brahman remains what it has always been—eternal, immutable, pure, partless, and non-dual. Ether (*ākāśa*) which is one appears to be many due to the adjuncts by which it is delimited. It does not cease to be eternal just because the ether enclosed in a pot disappears when the limiting adjunct, *viz* the pot, is destroyed. Nor does it lose its purity even though it appears to be foul due to the adjunct. In the same way the impurity of the phenomenal world or that of the psycho-physical organism which is the limiting adjunct of the Self does not affect the purity of Brahman-Ātman, the trans-phenomenal reality. Brahman is one, though it appears to be many due to adjuncts. Being an illusory appearance, the world of plurality will pass away, but Brahman, the absolutely real, will remain without prejudice to its non-duality.<sup>97</sup>

97. *BS*, Part I, p. 19.

## CHAPTER IV

### CRITIQUE OF DIFFERENCE

#### 1

According to the *Upaniṣad*, Brahman alone is real and it is one and non-dual. In an earlier chapter, it was pointed out that what the *Upaniṣad* says about the ultimate reality cannot be questioned and set aside on the ground that perception and other *pramāṇas* testify to the existence of a plurality of things.<sup>1</sup> Two arguments were given to show why the evidence of the *Upaniṣad* holds good. Perception and other sources of knowledge are concerned with things empirical; they have nothing to do with Brahman, the trans-empirical reality which falls within the scope of *śruti*. And so there can be no conflict between *śruti* on the one hand and perception and other *pramāṇas* on the other. The second argument was that, when the evidences of *śruti* and other *pramāṇas* are conflicting in so far as they relate to the nature of reality, the evidence of *śruti* which is impersonal and which comes after perception will hold good, and not that of perception and other *pramāṇas*. Both these arguments were stated on the assumption that there is plurality at the empirical level and that perception and other sources of knowledge vouch for the reality of difference. Maṇḍana argues in the *Tarka-kāṇḍa* of his *Brahmasiddhi* that neither perception nor any other means of knowledge reveals difference. According to him,

1. See Chap. I, pp. 20-28.

difference is not known through perception; nor can it be established through inference. He also examines at great length the Vaiśeṣika theory of absolute difference, the Bhāṭṭa theory of identity in difference, the Jaina theory of relative pluralism, and the Bauddha theory of difference, and exposes their untenability.

## 2

Maṇḍana argues that perception simply reveals an object; it does not distinguish one object from others. It can manifest, for example, a pot; but it cannot distinguish it, say from a table, and thereby establish the difference between the two. In order to show that the work of perception is only the manifestation of an object, Maṇḍana enumerates all the possible alternatives regarding the function of perception. Three alternatives are possible in the first instance. They are: (A) perception reveals an object; (B) it distinguishes one object from others; and (C) it reveals an object and also distinguishes it from others. The third alternative admits of three sub-divisions. They are: (a) perception reveals an object and distinguishes it from others simultaneously; (b) it first distinguishes one object from others and then reveals the nature of the object; and (c) it first reveals an object and then distinguishes it from others.<sup>2</sup>

If we take the first two alternatives and the three sub-divisions of the third alternative, we get five alternatives as follows: (1) perception reveals an object; (2) it distinguishes one object from others; (3) it reveals an object and distinguishes it from others simultaneously; (4) it first distinguishes one object from others, and then reveals the nature of the object; and (5) it first reveals an object and then distinguishes it from others.

2. *BS*, Part I, p. 44.

If it can be shown that perception reveals difference between one object and another, or that it both reveals an object and distinguishes it from others simultaneously or one after another, then difference can be supposed to be known through perception. If it can be proved, on the contrary, that perception only manifests an object without distinguishing it from others, it must be admitted that the notion of difference is not conveyed by perception and that therefore the starting point of the advocates of diversity, viz that difference is perceived, is wrong. In order to establish difference between two objects, we must first distinguish the one from the other. Difference presupposes distinction. Without the act of distinguishing, difference cannot take place. In order to refute the contention that difference is apprehended through perception, Maṇḍana argues that perception does not differentiate one object from others, but only reveals an object.<sup>8</sup>

Maṇḍana first singles out the second alternative, according to which perception distinguishes one object from others, and exposes its untenability. When it is conclusively proved that perception cannot differentiate one object from another, it makes an easy opening for the elimination of the other alternatives. Before perception distinguishes one object from another in order to establish the difference between the two, it must first reveal the two and assert their existence. Difference must concern itself in a relation between two things. When we say: "The cow is not a horse," "The pot is not on the ground," the notion of difference conveyed by these propositions carries a reference to two things. We establish difference between cow and horse by negating the horse from the cow. Therefore, the notion of difference involves negation. The negation involved in

3. *Ibid.*, p. 39: "āhurvidhātr̥ pratyakṣam na niṣeddhṛ vipaścitāḥ."

the notion of difference can have no bearing without that which is negated (*pratiṣedhya*) and that of which it is negated (*pratiṣedhaviṣaya*). In the sentence, "The pot is not on the ground," the pot which is negated from the ground is *pratiṣedhya*; it is also known as *pratiyogin* or counter-correlate; and the ground of which the pot is negated is *pratiṣedhaviṣaya*; it is also known as *anuyogin* or correlate. Maṇḍana contends that perception should first reveal and assert the existence of both the correlate and the counter-correlate before negation involved in the notion of difference takes place. If the correlate and the counter-correlate are not first asserted as existing, negation for the purpose of manifesting difference is not possible.<sup>4</sup> This is true even with regard to a chimerical entity like the sky-lotus which is totally non-existent. When we say: "The sky-lotus does not exist," it appears as if our rule does not hold good. The sky-lotus is totally non-existent with the result that the question of its existence at a particular place or at a particular time does not arise; if so, negation, it appears, is meaningless and also it is not possible. A little reflection will reveal to us that Maṇḍana's standpoint, *viz* that negation involved in the notion of difference presupposes the manifestation and assertion of the correlate and the counter-correlate, the two things involved in difference, still holds good. The sky is existent; the lotus is existent; and so when we say that the sky-lotus does not exist, we negate the existence of the lotus in the sky. This is how we interpret the negation of a chimerical entity like the sky-lotus.<sup>5</sup> Thus when we distinguish two objects from each other and thereby establish the difference between them, the objects between which the difference is manifested must first be known. If there is negation without the correlate and the counter-correlate,

4. *Ibid.*, verse 2, p. 44.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

it will not prove difference. On the contrary, it will lead to the void, a total nothing, because negation, without being restricted to the two objects between which the difference is to be manifested, is applied to all and everywhere. We can restate the contention of Maṇḍana as follows: one object is distinguished from another in order to manifest the difference between the two; and this is possible only when the two objects which are distinguished from each other and between which the difference is manifested are first known. So the manifestation or assertion of objects must precede differentiation of the one from the other (*vidhipūrvaka eva ca niṣedhaḥ*). Perception can only reveal an object; it cannot distinguish one object from another.<sup>6</sup>

We have shown so far that perception does not distinguish one object from another. Since affirmation to which the function of perception is restricted must precede denial, it follows that perception can neither first distinguish an object from others and then reveal its nature, nor can it simultaneously present the object and its distinction from others.

The last alternative, which remains to be examined, maintains that perception after revealing an object distinguishes it from others.<sup>7</sup> This is also untenable. Maṇḍana argues that perception cannot discharge two functions, *viz* revealing an object as well as differentiating it from another, one after another. Perception is one unique process of cognition; there are no two moments in it such that it could first reveal an object and then distinguish it from others. The moment it reveals an object, its work comes to an end; the differentiation which follows is not due to perception. Further, per-

6. "*vidhimātra-vyāpāram ca pratyakṣam.*"

7. "*vidhipūrvako vyavacchedaḥ.*"

ception reveals an object which is in sense contact. It cannot manifest an object which is not in contact with the sense. After revealing an object which is in sense contact, it cannot at that moment distinguish it from another object which is not in sense contact. We perceive, for example, a pot which is in sense contact. After manifesting the object, perception cannot at that moment distinguish it from another object, say a table, which is not in sense contact. So long as the table is not in sense contact, but only the pot, we cannot have the denial to the effect, "The pot is not a table." So there are no two moments in perception enabling it first to reveal the object with which there is sense contact and then to reveal the object which is not at that moment in contact with the sense, and also the difference between the two.<sup>8</sup> All that perception can do is to reveal an object.

We can sum up Maṇḍana's standpoint as follows. (1) Denial is preceded by affirmation. (2) In perception there are no two moments such that it could discharge two functions, one after another. (3) Perception cannot reveal an object which is not in sense contact.<sup>9</sup>

It might be argued that none of the three points emphasized by Maṇḍana hold good in the case of the correction of an illusion such as, "This is not silver, but shell." We get the knowledge of shell after negating the cognition of silver. Since the perceptual knowledge of shell is preceded by a negation, the contention that only after an affirmation there is denial, it may be argued, falls through. Again, since the affirmation of shell takes place after the negation of silver through perception, there are two functions coming one after another in one and the same process of cognition.

8. *BS*, Part I, verse 3, p. 45.

9. *BS*, Part II, p. 131.

Thirdly, since there is cognition of silver which is not in contact with the sense, it may be urged that the contention that perception cannot reveal an object which is not in sense contact does not hold good.

Maṇḍana argues that the example cited above does not constitute a breach of the principle laid down by him. When we discover the illusion, we express ourselves as "This is not silver, but shell." Without cognizing silver, we could not say that it is not silver. The cognition of silver as expressed in the proposition, "This is silver," should precede the negation of it as "This is not silver." It is only when the presented object is perceived as "this before" that it is denied as being the silver for which it is taken; and when it is thus negated, there is the perception of shell. Hence, before negation there is affirmation. Maṇḍana does not deny that, when we discover the illusion and come to know of the presented object as only a shell, the affirmation of shell is preceded by the negation to the effect, "This is not silver." There is no negation, declares Maṇḍana, without there first being an affirmation; but it does not mean that an affirmation cannot be preceded by a negation.<sup>10</sup>

The second objection may now be considered. When we discover that the object presented is a piece of shell and not silver, there are no two functions coming one after another in the process of perceptual cognition of shell; on the contrary, the negation of silver and the affirmation of shell are only two aspects of the same cognition. The cognition in this case takes place in two forms. This can be compared to *citra-jñāna* wherein the cognition of different colours contained in a picture has different aspects or forms, all presented in one and the same cognition.<sup>11</sup>

10. BS, Part I, p. 45.

11. BS, Part II, p. 132.



In reply to the third objection, Maṇḍana says that when we cognize the presented object as silver, the "silver" is presented to us as being identical with it. In so far as the object which is presented to us is in sense contact, the silver which is cognized is also in contact with the sense.

The Bauddhas argue that manifesting an object itself involves differentiation from others. Perception, according to them, is the indeterminate knowledge (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*) of objects unassociated with names and relations which are due to the work of the mind. When perception reveals an object, the indeterminate knowledge which we get is restricted to one object; and when it is thus restricted, it naturally takes place by negating other things. When we perceive a pot, our cognition is restricted to the form of the pot; it is a cognition in which the form of another object is absent. We thus cognize it as a pot and not as any other object. It is by the power of the indeterminate cognition of an object that both the positive determinate cognition and its difference from others are produced. Though the positive and the negative are two cognitions, in so far as both of them are derived from the indeterminate cognition, it can be said that by one positive cognition of an object we may have its difference from others also manifested.<sup>12</sup>

Maṇḍana criticizes the Bauddha view and rejects it as it leads to the fallacies of over-applicability (*ativyāpti*) and partial inapplicability (*avyāpti*). Apparently there is no difficulty when we say that the cognition of the blue colour of an object, say a mango, negates other colours like red, etc. because the cognition that takes

12. *BS*, Part I, p. 46.

place is such that other colours do not find a place in that cognition ; that is to say, it is a cognition which is restricted to one form of the object. The Bauddha principle of restriction of the cognition to one form of the object is not, however, so simple as it seems to be. This principle, strictly speaking, should enable us to negate only those objects which can be perceived, and not those which are imperceptible. But it leads to the negation of all objects, perceptible as well as imperceptible, without any restriction whatsoever. Not only should we say that the cognition of blue colour negates red and other colours which can be perceived, but also that it negates the imperceptible atoms, for the atoms, like red and other colours, do not find a place in the cognition which is restricted to one thing, *viz* the blue colour. Such a negation should not take place. But since the principle enunciated by the Bauddhas leads to it, there arises the fallacy of over-applicability. Further, the standpoint of the Bauddhas does not hold good in the case of the perception of a multi-coloured picture. When we see a variegated picture, we do not perceive the different colours painted in it one after another in succession ; on the contrary, we perceive the variegated picture as a whole, and the different colours are presented together as the content of one and the same cognition. Since the cognition in this case, without being restricted to one colour, comprises several colours painted in the picture, there should be no differentiation of colours, when the picture as a whole is seen. As a matter of fact, we are able to differentiate them from one another, even though they are presented as the content of the same cognition. Thus the Bauddha standpoint is vitiated by the fallacy of partial inapplicability.<sup>18</sup>

13. *Ibid.*, verse 4, p. 46.

The advocates of difference try to establish their standpoint in another way. They hold the view that difference is identical with the object which is perceived. According to this view, objects by their very nature are different from one another. The nature of a pot is such that it is different from a piece of cloth. So when an object is perceived, its difference from other objects is also perceived by that very act. Since difference constitutes the nature of the object perceived, it should not be said that it is something other than the object. On the other hand, it is identical with the object. Thus, when an object is perceived, it must be admitted that difference also is perceived, because difference is identical with the object.

Maṇḍana argues that it is impossible to establish difference among objects in this way. When it is said that difference constitutes the nature of object, it is taken that it is one, even though it is located in a plurality of objects. If all the objects are of the nature of difference, there would be no difference among them. Let us say for the sake of argument that there are three objects—A, B and C. Difference, though one, is located in all the three objects by virtue of its constituting the nature of object. If A, B, and C are of the nature of difference, *i.e.* if they are identical with difference, then they are identical with one another; for objects which are identical with the same thing are identical with one another. Thus, if objects were to be of the nature of difference, there would be no difference among them. In other words, the oneness of all things as taught by the *Upaniṣad* holds good. Finding that the view that difference constitutes the nature of object is of no avail in establishing their standpoint, the votaries of difference may argue that difference does not constitute the nature of object, and that it is something different from it. In that case it is impossible, argues

Maṇḍana, to hold the view that objects are by their very nature different from one another.<sup>14</sup>

In another way also Maṇḍana lays bare the difficulty involved in the view that difference constitutes the nature of object. Difference is mutual non-existence. The proposition "A is not B" conveys the notion that A is not of the nature of B, and that B is not of the nature of A; *i.e.* there is the non-existence of B as A, as also the non-existence of A as B. Thus, difference is of the nature of non-existence. If difference constitutes the nature of object, it follows that the object is of the nature of non-existence, because difference which constitutes its nature is of the nature of non-existence. So, this view would deprive the object of its existence and reduce it to a nullity. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the view which holds that object is of the nature of difference.<sup>15</sup>

Further, the concept of difference involves duality. If difference were to constitute the nature of object, no object, could be regarded as one. The Bauddhas may contend that this standpoint is acceptable to them. Every object, according to them, is an assemblage of atoms, and so it is not one, but many. There is, however, a fundamental difficulty which cannot be got over by the Bauddhas. An atom, we would be compelled to say, is not one, because difference which constitutes its nature signifies duality. But this is absurd. This leads to another difficulty also. The many presupposes the one. It is the result of the addition of one with one. In the absence of anything to be reckoned as one, we cannot have an aggregate or a plurality of atoms. It follows, therefore, that there is no object which can be

14. *Ibid.*, verse 5, p. 47.

15. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 47.

treated as an assemblage of many atoms. What then? There is no object which can be treated as one; there is nothing to be called many; and a third alternative is inconceivable. Thus there arises the contingency of the non-existence of object.<sup>16</sup>

We have shown that it is impossible to prove that objects are different from one another either by holding the view that difference which constitutes the nature of object is non-different from it or by maintaining the view that difference does not constitute the nature of object and that it is different from the latter. When the advocates of difference are thus cornered, they may try a back-to-the-wall defence and argue that the discussion whether difference is non-different or different from the object is neither pertinent nor possible, since it is a non-entity (*avastu*) like the sky-flower. It is intelligible and also possible to raise questions of this type with regard to an existent something. Though it is a non-entity like the sky-flower, it carries sense, and has its application in our day-to-day life, because we pass judgments like "This object is different from that." Such judgments involving difference, they contend, are the result of *vikalpa-jñāna* or cognition which does not involve any existent object as its content.<sup>17</sup> Maṇḍana points out that this line of reasoning leads to the pivotal point of Advaita. If it is conceded that the nature of difference cannot be ascertained, it is an open admission that difference is not ultimately real. If there is no difference in reality, objects cannot be said to be different from one another. In other words, reality is one only, and plurality is an appearance due to *avidyā*. This is the fundamental thesis of Advaita.<sup>18</sup>

16. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

17. *BS*, Part II, p. 139: "*vastuśūnyaḥ pratyayo vikalpaḥ.*"

18. *BS*, Part I, p. 48.

It is sometimes argued that difference can be inferred from successful activities (*arthakriyā*). We know that successful activities which are different from one another are caused by different objects. One and the same object cannot be made use of for different activities. For example, carrying water in a pot is different from cutting a piece of wood. These two activities imply two different objects, *viz* a pot and an axe. The pot is used for carrying water, for its nature is such that it can be used for this type of successful activity. It cannot be used for cutting a piece of wood. Thus, according to this argument, the difference among objects can be inferred from the difference in successful activities.<sup>19</sup>

This argument is not satisfactory for several reasons. First of all, the argument is fallacious as it commits the fallacy of *petitio principii*. Difference among objects which is to be proved should not be assumed in the process of proof. When the difference among objects is inferred from the difference in successful activities, it is assumed that there is difference in successful activities. The point at issue is the reality of difference, be it in respect of successful activity or some other thing. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the advocates of difference to prove difference *without assuming it* in respect of successful activity.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, it is wrong to think that one and the same object cannot be the cause of different successful activities. Fire, for example, is used for burning an object, cooking food, and illuminating things.<sup>21</sup> It is no argument to say that fire consists of different qualities like colour, touch, and so on, and that a particular quality, *e. g.* colour, accounts for a specific type of

19. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

20. *Ibid.* Also see *BS*, Part II, p. 145.

21. *BS*, Part I, p. 50.

activity, *e.g.* illumination. One and the same quality, *viz* touch, possessed by fire accounts for burning and cooking which are admitted for all practical purposes to be different in our day-to-day experience. So one and the same object can account for different activities.<sup>22</sup>

It may be argued that different potencies which inhere in fire are the cause of activities such as burning, cooking, etc. It means, according to this argument, that different activities are caused by different potencies and not by one object. If so, it is wrong to say that one object is the cause of many results. This argument too, Maṇḍana contends, is not satisfactory. If one and the same object can be the locus of different potencies, why should it be said that one and the same object cannot be causally related to several activities?<sup>23</sup> Further, are the potencies different or non-different from the locus in which they inhere? If they are non-different from the locus, then the locus is a one-many; *i.e.* it is one as fire, and many in the form of potencies. If no contradiction is involved in the existence of the many with the one when they remain in the same locus, how can there be any contradiction when one object, which is the cause and the many results brought forth by it are in different loci? If the potencies are different from the object in which they inhere, how are they related to the locus? Since the potencies are different from the locus, the relation between them cannot be *tādātmya*. Nor is it possible to explain the relation between them in terms of direct contact (*nairantarya*). If fire is said to be the locus of the potencies on the ground that the potencies are in direct contact with it, then wood (*kāṣṭha*) also can be the locus of those potencies, since the direct contact that obtains between fire and the potencies also

22. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

23. *Ibid.*, verses 9 and 9½, p. 56.

obtains between the wood and the potencies.<sup>24</sup> There is also another difficulty. Since ether (*ākāśa*) is in direct contact with innumerable objects, it can be credited, on the basis of this argument, with all the potencies inherent in innumerable objects. But this is wrong. Under these circumstances, all that could be said is that a certain object, say fire, is the locus of the different potencies by somehow helping them severally. If the help rendered by one object could be many, why should it not be said that many results are brought forth by one and the same object?<sup>25</sup>

Let us consider another argument by which difference is sought to be established. It is argued that mutually opposed activities like birth and death, growth and decay, movement and stillness, etc. which take place simultaneously point to objects which are different from one another, for they cannot take place simultaneously in one and the same object. Birth and death cannot take place at the same time in one and the same object. Similarly, growth and decay are not possible in an object at the same time. It means that an object which comes into existence must be different from that which passes away. An object which grows must be different from that which decays. So according to this argument, difference among objects can be established from the mutually opposed activities taking place at the same time (*yugapad viruddhārthakriyā*).<sup>26</sup>

This argument, Maṇḍana says, is not convincing. It is necessary to know the sense in which growth and decay, death and birth, etc. are referred to as mutually opposed. If it conveys the idea that growth and decay,

24. *BS*, Part II, p. 157.

25. *BS*, Part, p. 56.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 52 : "*yugapad-viruddhārthakriyādarśanād-bhedāvagatiḥ*."



birth and death, and so on, cannot take place simultaneously in one and the same thing, it is not acceptable to the Advaitin, for he maintains that the whole show of the pluralistic universe with all the multifarious activities takes place in Brahman-Ātman by being superimposed thereon.<sup>27</sup> If, on the contrary, it conveys the idea that the nature of birth is different from that of death, that the nature of growth is different from that of decay, and so on, it does not prove difference among objects. Though burning is different from cooking, they are the activities of one and the same fire. From these activities we do not infer that fire which burns is different from fire which cooks. The admission of different qualities does not lead to the admission of different objects, for we know that different qualities can inhere in one and the same object. In the same way, the admission of different activities does not lead to the admission of different objects.<sup>28</sup>

There is yet another argument to be considered. It is argued that the reality of difference can be proved by means of characteristics which are mutually opposed. *According to this argument, mutual opposition means mutual non-existence (anyonyābhāva).* For example, happiness and misery are mutually opposed. Happiness is the non-existence of misery, and misery in its turn is the non-existence of happiness. Since happiness and misery are mutually opposed, they cannot co-exist in the same place simultaneously. The reason for this is obvious. Misery is non-existence of happiness; and so to say that happiness and misery co-exist in the same place amounts to saying that happiness and non-existence of

27. BS, Part II, p. 149: "asmākaṁ hi viruddhaṁ ca sarvaṁ ekatrātmāni samavetam."

28. BS, Part I, p. 52.

happiness are in the same place at the same time, which is absurd. Since it is absurd to think of happiness and misery co-existing in the same place, it should be said, according to this argument, that they point to different objects. What is true of happiness and misery is also true, it is argued, with regard to other characteristics which are mutually opposed.

The above argument is untenable. If attributes which are different are explained in terms of mutual non-existence, they cease to be positive, for each attribute according to this interpretation is of the nature of non-existence. If so, the possibility of conflict between any two attributes is ruled out. Moreover, the explanation of attributes in terms of mutual non-existence (*anyonyābhāva*) leads to absurdity when it is applied to a non-entity like sky-flower. There is neither happiness nor misery in sky-flower. Since it is claimed that the non-existence of happiness is misery, one might argue on the basis of the non-existence of happiness therein that there is misery in sky-flower. Similarly, since the non-existence of misery is happiness, one might argue on the basis of the non-existence of misery therein that there is happiness in sky-flower. Thus, if we interpret attributes in terms of mutual non-existence, we will be compelled to say that there is happiness as well as misery in sky-flower which does not exist at all.<sup>29</sup> The advocates of difference may argue that by mutual opposition they do not mean mutual non-existence, but destroyer-destroyed relation as in the case of happiness and misery. A little examination is enough to show that even this interpretation will not help them to establish the thesis of difference. An attribute cannot destroy another without coming into existence. Nor can it destroy another which remains in a different locus. It means that an attribute

can destroy another by coming into existence in the same locus in which the other attribute which has to be destroyed exists. If so, the destroyer-destroyed relation does not lend support to different loci, but to the same locus.<sup>30</sup>

The concept of mutual opposition may be interpreted in a different way with a view to prove the reality of difference. Mutual opposition means, according to this explanation, conflict that obtains between positive and negative attributes such as permanence and non-permanence. It is well-known that permanence and non-permanence are different, and so the objects characterized by them should be different. An object which is permanent cannot also be non-permanent. It follows, therefore, that difference among things should be accepted. This argument too, Maṇḍana says, is not satisfactory as the assumption on which it proceeds is wrong. It assumes that an attribute should necessarily pervade the entire substance in which it inheres. But this assumption is wrong. We can drive home the point by an illustration. An aeroplane which is in the *ākāśa* does not pervade the entire *ākāśa*; it occupies only a limited portion of it. Nor does the relation of conjunction which exists between the aeroplane and the *ākāśa* pervade the entire *ākāśa*. While an aeroplane has a limited dimension, *ākāśa* is all-pervasive. Consequently, an aeroplane cannot pervade the entire *ākāśa*. In the same way, limited characteristics, though mutually opposed, can co-exist in the infinite Brahman which serves as the locus therefor. It is true that permanence, unlike other characteristics, pervades the entire Self. The Advaitin holds the view that Brahman-Ātman alone is eternal, and he does not admit the reality of non-permanence. How, then, it may be asked, can permanence and non-permanence co-exist in Brahman-Ātman? The Advaitin's answer is

that though Brahman-Atman is eternal, non-permanence which is illusory can exist in it, being falsely superimposed thereon.<sup>31</sup>

Another argument by which the reality of difference is sought to be proved may now be considered. There is *vyavasthā*, i.e. order and restriction, in the occurrence of phenomena. For example, curd comes into existence from milk alone, and not from sesamum. A certain result caused by a certain object is not brought forth by another object. This restriction in the occurrence of results implies, according to this argument, the existence of different objects. If objects were identical and not different, there would be no such order and restriction in the occurrence of phenomena. In that case, anything can come out of anything: "curd can come out of sesamum, and oil from milk. Or, it may be that both curd and oil can come out of either milk or sesamum. But this is not borne out by our experience. Since we notice order and arrangement in the occurrence of phenomena, it means that there is difference among objects.

This argument cannot stand examination. Though different phenomena may occur, it does not mean that there must be difference among objects which cause them; for we have shown that one and the same entity, e.g. fire, may account for different results. Moreover, the argument given above, Maṇḍana says, begs the question. There is restriction, it was said, in such a way that curd is obtained from milk and not from any other object; and this restriction is relied upon to prove the difference between milk and the *other* object. The difficulty here is that the *otherness* (*anyatvam*) of the object, which is to be proved, is assumed in the alleged restriction in the occurrence of results. The difference between milk and the other object is *assumed* when the

restriction in the occurrence of results is mentioned, as in the case of curd being caused by milk and not by the other object; and then, the restriction in the occurrence of results is relied upon to prove the difference between milk and the other object. So the argument involves the fallacy of *petitio principii*.<sup>32</sup>

Maṇḍana argues that just as one and the same fire accounts for different activities, Brahman which is non-dual accounts for the plurality of things characterized by different qualities and functions, by means of the unimaginable and incomparable power inherent in it. *Śruti* conveys this idea when it says, "Such is its manifest power."<sup>33</sup> Though Brahman or *Puruṣa* is one, it is said to have "a thousand heads."<sup>34</sup> Further, it says that *Puruṣa* is "that which existed and that which will exist,"<sup>35</sup> and that "*Puruṣa* alone is all this."<sup>36</sup> The entire universe, *śruti* adds, is as it were only "a fourth part"<sup>37</sup> of *Puruṣa*. Maṇḍana says that the idea underlying all these *śruti* passages is that the phenomenal world which has a limited dimension is negligibly small (*ālbam*), and that the trans-phenomenal reality is infinite (*aparimitam*). So the infinite Brahman, according to Advaita, is the locus of many divergent activities and conflicting characteristics which we witness in our experience. In order to answer the questions, "Why should milk be the cause of curd and not of oil? Why should milk and sesamum not produce the same result? Or, why should sesamum not produce curd, and milk oil?" the advocates of difference have to say that the

32. *Bṣ*, Part I, p. 54.

33. *Puruṣa-sūktā*, 3.

34. *Ibid.*, 1.

35. *Ibid.*, 2.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, 3.

marvellous potency inherent in every object is such that it gives rise to a particular result alone and not any other, and that the unique power inherent in every object can only be inferred from the results which take place. Maṇḍana observes that instead of assuming difference among objects and then crediting each one of them with a unique power, one may as well argue that one and the same entity gives rise to diverse results in an orderly way by the marvellous power inherent in it. The assumption of the reality of difference is not warranted by any *pramāṇa*. When by means of one entity the diversity of results and their orderly occurrence can be explained, it is, Maṇḍana concludes, nothing but prolixity (*gaurava*) to assume a plurality of objects.<sup>38</sup>

## 4

The Bhāṭṭas hold the view that difference can be known through *anupalabdhi*. Difference is mutual non-existence (*anyonyābhāva*). It involves the non-existence of one entity as something else. When we say, "This is a pot and not a piece of cloth," we have the knowledge of the difference between pot and cloth. Kumārila says: "The cognition of objects as distinct from one another depends on the validity of this (*anupalabdhi*) as a means of cognition."<sup>39</sup> Since difference is *anyonyābhāva*, i.e. the non-existence of one thing as something else, it can be known, the Bhāṭṭas maintain, through *anupalabdhi*.

It may be noticed that difference which is to be proved is assumed when one thing is negated from something else, i.e. when one thing is said to be non-existent as something else. Hence there arises the

38. BS, Part I, p. 55.

39. *Ślokavārtika*, p. 473.

fallacy of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*). This point needs elucidation. Negation, we said, is possible only when the locus and also the content of negation are affirmed and apprehended first of all as distinct from each other. In the absence of such a knowledge of both of them, difference between them cannot be established through negation. Kumārila too holds the same view. He says that after the correlate (*anuyogin*) has been perceived, and the counter-correlate (*pratiyogin*) has been remembered, then follows the cognition of non-existence.<sup>40</sup> It means that the prior knowledge of the two entities, the correlate and the counter-correlate, is necessary for getting the knowledge of the non-existence of one thing as something else. We can know the *anyonyābhāva* (which is only another name for difference) of a pot and a cloth only if we know them first as distinct from each other. Here arises the fallacy of mutual dependence: the cognition of negation presupposes the cognition of entities as distinct from each other, and the cognition of entities as distinct from each other is dependent upon the cognition of negation.<sup>41</sup>

Let us now consider the nature of *anupalabdhi* which is said to be the *pramāṇa* for the cognition of non-existence. The word *anupalabdhi* means "absence of cognition," "non-cognition" (*jñānābhāva*). When we speak of the non-cognition of a book on the table, what does this non-cognition mean? It may mean the non-cognition of the counter-correlate (*pratiyogin*, viz the book); or it may mean the cognition of another object (*anyavastujñānam*).<sup>42</sup> Maṇḍana says that whatever may

40. *Ibid.*, p. 482 :

"grhītvā vastusadbhāvaṃ smṛtvā ca pratiyoginam  
mānasam nāstitājñānam jāyate'kṣānapekṣayā."

41. *BS*, Part I, p. 57. See also *BS*, Part II, p. 159.

42. See *BS*, Part II, p. 159.

be the explanation there arises the fallacy of mutual dependence. The latter explanation may first be considered. At the time of getting the cognition of the table, we do not cognize the book, and so we conclude, it may be said, that the non-cognition of the book here points to its non-existence on the table. Maṇḍana remarks that it is not sound reasoning to say that the non-cognition that takes place here means the cognition of the "other" object. When the difference between two objects is not proved, it is wrong to speak of the cognition of the *other* object. To interpret non-cognition in this way is to assume the difference between the two objects; and the difference between the two objects (*i.e.* the non-existence of one object as another) is said to be known through non-cognition. The reasoning here is fallacious because of *anyonyāśraya*.<sup>43</sup> The other interpretation fares no better. According to this interpretation, non-cognition means non-cognition of the counter-correlate (*e.g.* the book which is non-existent on the table). When there is the non-cognition of the counter-correlate, it is said that there is the cognition of the other object (*viz* the table), for otherwise it would mean absence of all cognitions with the result that non-cognition cannot be restricted to one object. Here also, Maṇḍana remarks, there arises the fallacy of mutual dependence: assuming the difference between the two objects, we say that there is the non-cognition of the counter-correlate alone, and that it points to its non-existence; and non-cognition, it is claimed, points to the difference between the two objects (*i.e.* the non-existence of the one as the other). So it is impossible to prove difference which is mutual non-existence by means of *anupalabdhi*.<sup>44</sup>

43. *Ibid.*: "yadi anyavastujñānamanupalabdhiḥ, tato nāsiddhe vastubhede sā siddhyati; atastajñānāya vastubhedo jñātavyaḥ."

44. *BS*, Part I, pp. 57-58.



The Nyāya explanation of the cognition of non-existence is equally unsatisfactory. According to the Naiyāyika, a sense-organ which perceives an object can also perceive its generic attribute (*jāti*) and its non-existence (*abhāva*).<sup>45</sup> For example, we perceive the ground, and we remember the pot, which is not cognized there : *i e.* we perceive the *anuyogin* and remember the *pratiyogin* ; thus we are able to perceive the non-existence of pot on the ground. According to the Naiyāyika, when we perceive the non-existence of the pot on the ground, there is first of all contact (*saṁyoga*) between the visual sense and the ground ; and secondly there is a peculiar contact between the ground and the absence of the pot. The ground and the non-existence of the pot have the relation of the qualification and the qualified (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-bhāva*). This explanation too, says Maṇḍana, is not free from the fallacy of mutual dependence. As stated earlier, we can negate the pot from the ground only if we first know the difference between the pot and the ground. It is by first cognizing the difference between the ground and the pot we can perceive the non-existence of the pot on the ground ; and by perceiving the non-existence of the pot on the ground, we can cognize the difference between them ; and so the Nyāya explanation is vitiated by the fallacy of mutual dependence.<sup>46</sup>

## 5

According to Maṇḍana, it is impossible to prove the reality of difference, since objects are cognized in one form as non-different from one another. In indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpa*) we cognize objects as mere existence (*sattā*). Existence constitutes the nature of

45. See S. Kuppaswami Sastri, *A Primer of Indian Logic*, p. 230.

46. *BS*, Part I, p. 58.

objects; and this nature is common to all the objects. Inasmuch as objects are cognized as mere existence, they are non-different from one another. If so, it is impossible, according to Maṇḍana, to negate one object from another; *i.e.* difference which is mutual negation is not possible. We can drive home the point by an example. When we cognize a pot, we should not say that we do not cognize a piece of cloth. Since pot and cloth are of the nature of existence, (*sattā*), the cognition of the one is tantamount to the cognition of the other. It follows that objects are non-different from one another, and that difference which consists in the negation of one object from another is not tenable.<sup>47</sup>

We may consider in this connection a possible objection against Maṇḍana's theory of *sattāsāmānya*, *i.e.* the theory that existence is the common element running through all the objects. The Bauddhas argue that existence (*sattā*) is not a characteristic common to all the objects. They maintain that, if objects are cognized as non-different from one another, it is because of recognition (*pratyabhijñā*). For example, because of the recognition of the same form in the several cows which are seen at different times, we speak of the generic attribute "cowness" as if it inheres in all of them. Strictly speaking, the Bauddhas say, there is no such thing as *sattāsāmānya*. Let us examine the problem in this way. If after seeing a cow, we see another cow, there is the recognition of the same form. And this recognition enables us to conclude that they belong to the same class. However, there is no such recognition when we see a horse after seeing a cow. If existence, as argued by Maṇḍana, were to constitute the nature of objects, there must be recognition of the same form when we see a mountain after seeing a mustard, or

when we see a horse after seeing a cow. Since there is no recognition in these cases, there is, the Bauddhas argue, no such characteristic as existence common to all objects.

This criticism, Maṇḍana replies, is of no avail. Maṇḍana maintains that there is recognition of the same form or nature when we see a mountain after seeing a mustard, because we cognize both of them as of the nature of existence. If it be said that notwithstanding the common element, *viz sattāsamānya*, there is difference between them, which accounts for the absence of recognition when we see a mountain after seeing a mustard, Maṇḍana replies that there is also difference between two individual cows with the result that there is no recognition when we see a second cow after seeing the first one. When we say, "This is that Devadatta," there is recognition of the person whom we see now as the same person whom we saw earlier. Since the same individual is cognized at different times, there is no difference in individual unit (*vyakti*). But there is difference between individual cows seen at different times. If so, the Bauddhas who maintain that the difference between a mustard and a mountain is responsible for the absence of recognition when we cognize them should also hold, in the interest of consistency, that there is no recognition when we see a second cow after seeing the first one because of the difference between the individual cows. But inconsistently enough, they maintain that there is recognition of the same form when we see cows, whereas they deny it in the case of the mountain and the mustard.

Difficulties arise if we say that it is recognition (*pratyabhijñā*), and not the cognition of the common element between two objects, that makes us conclude that they are same. We know that for the purpose of

recognition an object must be cognized at different times and places. If we recognize somebody and say, "This is that Devadatta," the person whom we see now in this place is the same whom we saw earlier at a different place. The question of recognition does not arise at all, when we cognize an object for the first time. Consider the case of an object seen for the first time. If we apply the principle of the critics to the case where an object is seen for the first time, we have to say, Maṇḍana argues, that the object is not one (*ekam*) because of the absence of recognition. This is on the face of it absurd. Or, consider another case. From a distance we see a herd of cows far removed from a herd of buffaloes. The individual cows are at different points of space; but since they are seen at the same time for the first time, recognition is not possible. In spite of the absence of recognition, in indeterminate perception we cognize the individual cows of the herd as non-different from one another. It means that it is the cognition of the common element that serves as the criterion for determining whether objects are identical or not, and not recognition. We may also consider another example given by Maṇḍana. There are two earthen jars. When we see the second jar after the first, we recognize the same nature, *i.e.* the earthness (*mrjjāti*) in them; and we conclude that they are of the same nature. But when we see a frying pan made of clay after seeing a jar also made of clay, there is no recognition of sameness. If so, we have to say on the basis of the view of the critics that there is no "earthness" which is the generic attribute in them, *i.e.* they do not belong to the same class of objects made of clay. This is obviously absurd. So Maṇḍana concludes that existence (*sattā*) constitutes the nature of objects and that objects are non-different from one another because of this common element running through all of them. In some cases, *e.g.* two earthen jars, the common element can easily be seen. In some other

cases, e.g. a clay-pan and a clay-jar, or a mustard and the mountain, the common element cannot easily be seen; here, in spite of differences in shape and size, we do cognize the common element in them, however dim and subdued it may be. Since existence constitutes the nature of all the objects, the cognition of one object is tantamount to the cognition of another object. Consequently, it is impossible, Maṇḍana says, to negate one object from another.<sup>48</sup>

## 6

We ascertain the nature of an object by means of cognition. Two conditions have to be fulfilled, if cognition has to play this role. First of all, it must have been generated by a *pramāṇa*. Secondly, it must accord with reason. A cognition which does not fulfil these conditions cannot be relied upon for determining the nature of object.<sup>49</sup> Maṇḍana says that, since the cognition of difference does not fulfil these two conditions, it cannot be the proof for the reality of difference. We cannot account for the cognition of difference through *pramāṇas* such as perception. It is true that there is the cognition of difference, but it is not produced by a *pramāṇa*; nor can it be justified by means of reasoning. Since the cognition of difference does not fulfil the two conditions stated above, it is not an evidence for the reality of difference. Maṇḍana observes that the cognition of difference is no better than the cognition of a fire-brand-circle (*alātacakra*). When we whirl a fire-brand rapidly, it appears as if there is a circle of fire,

48. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

49. *BS*, Part I, p. 59: “*na hi vijñānamityevārthatattvaṁ vyavasthāpayati; tadaṅgi hi parīkṣyam—yuktyā virudhyate neti, pramāṇottham neti.*”

though in reality there is none. We do not say that the circle of fire is real just because we have a cognition of it; in the same way we cannot say that difference is real just because we have a cognition of it. The cognition of difference which cannot be accounted for through any *pramāṇa* is illusory. Further, if difference is real, it cannot be denied; and if it is unreal, there should be no cognition of it. However, we have cognition of difference though the reality of difference can neither be proved by a *pramāṇa* nor vindicated by reasoning. The Advaitin, therefore, maintains that the cognition of difference is an illusion due to *avidyā*.<sup>50</sup>

It is necessary in this connection to examine at some length the categories of the generic attribute (*jāti*) and the specific feature (*viśeṣa*), as these two categories are pressed into service by the advocates of difference for the purpose of establishing their thesis. The universal or the generic attribute is common to several individuals belonging to a particular class. The particular or the specific feature of an object differentiates it from other objects.

The generic feature is the element of *anuvṛtti* or sameness among objects, while the specific feature is the element of *vyāvṛtti* which distinguishes one object from another. When we know a thing, e.g. a pot, we cognize its generic feature (potness) which is the element of *anuvṛtti* as well as its specific feature (its particular colour or shape) which is the element of *vyāvṛtti*. Since we have the knowledge of both *jāti* and *viśeṣa*, the universal and the particular, the advocates of difference argue that the reality of difference among objects cannot be denied. Since there are divergent views with regard to these two aspects, the universal and the

particular, it is necessary to examine them carefully. Let us consider how Vaiśeṣika, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, Buddhism, and Advaita explain these two aspects.

## 7

According to Vaiśeṣika, the category of generic attribute (*sāmānya* or *jāti*) is different from an individual object (*vyakti*) characterized by some specific feature. Though they are absolutely different from each other, they are nevertheless related by inherence (*samavāya*). There are many difficulties in accepting this view of the Vaiśeṣikas. First of all, if the generic attribute and the individual object are different from each other, the one cannot be equated with the other.<sup>51</sup> Consider the following case. When we say, "This is a cow," the word "this" refers to an individual object (*vyakti*), and the word "cow" refers to "cowness" (*gotva*) which is the generic attribute. Here the generic attribute is equated with the individual object as shown by the grammatical co-ordination (*sāmānādhikarānya*) that obtains between the two words, "this" and "cow". If they are really different, we should perceive them as "this" and "cowness", and not as "This is a cow". This may be contrasted with another case where we perceive two objects, e.g. pot and cloth, and give expression to our cognition as "pot" and "cloth", and not as "A pot is a cloth". While in the previous case, there is cognition of identity, in the present one there is no cognition of identity. Since the generic attribute and the individual object are referred to through words which are in grammatical co-ordination they are, Maṇḍana says, non-different.

There is also another reason to show why the generic attribute and the individual object are non-different.

51. BS, Part I, verse 12, p. 60.

When we perceive the one, we also perceive the other. If they are different like smoke and fire, they cannot be percepts at the same time. When we infer fire from smoke, smoke is a percept, but fire which is mediate (*parokṣa*) is not a percept. While the perception of smoke does not mean the perception of fire, the perception of the individual object is *ipso facto* the perception of its generic attribute. This conclusively proves, says Maṇḍana, that the generic attribute and the individual object are not different.<sup>52</sup> It is no argument to say that, though the generic attribute and the individual object are different, they are cognized as non-different due to the relation of *samavāya* that obtains between them. If the generic attribute and the individual object are really different, *samavāya* cannot conceal their difference and conjure up in that place an identity.<sup>53</sup> Since *samavāya* is admitted to be a relation, it implies that there is difference between the two terms related by it; and in the absence of difference between the relata, *samavāya* will disappear altogether as a relation. It is, indeed, futile to admit the difference between the generic attribute and the individual object and then invoke the relation of inherence, crediting it with a unique capacity to make things which are different appear as non-different. Instead, one may hold the view that reality which is one and non-dual appears as many due to the inscrutable power inherent in it. Instances are not wanting to show how one object may appear as many. Maṇḍana cites the familiar instance of *citrarūpa* or the variegated colour of a cloth. Though *citrarūpa* of the cloth is one, it appears in many colours. Maṇḍana takes great pains to show how the Vaiśeṣika must admit the existence of a separate colour in the cloth known as *citrarūpa*. It cannot be said that *citrarūpa* is no other than a conglomeration

52. *BS*, Part I, p. 61.

53. *BS*, Part I, verse 12½, p. 60.



of the colours of the threads. If a distinct colour as inherent in the composite cloth other than the colours of the component threads is not admitted, then the cloth as a composite entity would be devoid of colour ; and if it is colourless, it cannot be perceived. But we do perceive it, and so we have to admit the existence of a distinct colour of the cloth.<sup>54</sup>

Maṇḍana exposes the untenability of the Vaiśeṣika theory by drawing pointed attention to the futility of its pluralistic hypothesis in serving the practical ends of life. The Vaiśeṣika philosopher works out a rigid classification of categories. He maintains that substance is different from the generic attribute, that quality is different from substance, and that the generic attribute is different from quality. If we take any one category in isolation from others, it will be found totally unfit to serve the practical ends of our life. For instance, we cannot make use of the category of substance in isolation from the other categories like quality and generic attribute. In order to make a person understand a thing, we always refer to the generic attribute and the particular quality it possesses stressing their non-difference. Though the categories may be different from one another, so far as our practical life is concerned we understand them to be non-different. For example, the sentence, " This is a white cow," is not only intelligible, but also practically useful in transacting our activities ; here the usage is such that the categories are understood to be non-different from one another. The arrangement of the categories, if we are to accept the Vaiśeṣika, is in one way ; but our understanding of them is in a different way. The categories, as they are, do not serve the purpose of our life. On the contrary, how we understand them alone is conducive to the practical

54. *BS*, Part I, pp. 61-62.

interests of our life. Instead of revealing difference, our understanding reveals non-difference. Maṇḍana, therefore, maintains that the Vaiśeṣika theory of pluralism which is not practically useful is futile.<sup>55</sup> Since non-difference alone is useful in our affairs of life, there is no need to admit the reality of difference.

## 8

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school hold the view that, since the generic attribute is in the individual object (*jātirvyaktigatā*), they are different while being the same. When we say, "This is a cow," the individual object is referred to by the word "this", and the generic attribute by the word "cow". Here the generic attribute and the individual object are identified with each other, since the words which refer to them are placed in grammatical co-ordination. So they are not totally different. If they are identical, then like *hasta* and *kara*, "this" and "cowness" would turn out to be synonyms.<sup>56</sup> They are not, however, synonyms. So the Bhāṭṭas say that the generic attribute and the individual object are not totally different; nor are they absolutely the same. The relation between them is difference-cum-identity, or identity in difference (*bhedābheda*). Though difference and identity are ordinarily opposed to each other, yet they are admitted by the Bhāṭṭas to be compatible with each other on the strength of our experience. The Bhāṭṭas argue that experience is the ultimate court of appeal for determining the compatibility or incompatibility of two things. On the basis of our experience we say that taste and colour which co-exist in the same place are compatible with each other. If heat and cold are said to be incompatible with each other, it is because

55. *BS*, Part I, p. 62.

56. *Mānameyodaya*, p. 234.

of the fact that we do not experience them together in one and the same place. The Bhāṭṭas maintain that there is no incompatibility when it is said that the generic attribute and the individual object are different while being the same, because experience shows them to be such.

The standpoint of the Bhāṭṭas may be restated in this way. Every object is of the nature of generic attribute and the individual object (*sāmānya-viśeṣātmakam ekam vastu*). It means that every object is a one-many (*ekam dvyaत्मakam*). Though the generic attribute is in the individual object, we cognize the two as different, and so every object is dual (*dvyaत्मakam*) in character; the object is also one (*ekam*), because the generic attribute and the individual object, being placed in grammatical co-ordination, are cognized as non-different. So every object is a one-many.<sup>57</sup>

Maṇḍana observes that the Bhāṭṭa explanation of the relation between the generic attribute and the individual object does not satisfy the demands of reason. To say that an object is of the nature of both identity and difference is to bring together two incompatible factors in the same place, and therefore is patently self-contradictory. A cognition which reveals incompatible factors in a thing is *ipso facto* erroneous. The cognition of an object to the effect, "This may be a post or a man" is erroneous because it relates to incompatible elements in the same thing.<sup>58</sup> Maṇḍana contends that the cognition of an object in the dual form as a universal-particular, as a one-many, is on a par with a dubitative cognition (*saṁśaya-jñāna*). The cognition "This is a post or

57. BS, Part I, p. 63.

58. See S. Kuppaswami Sastri, *A Primer of Indian Logic*, pp. 339-40: "A doubt is a cognition which relates to several incompatible attributes in the same thing—as in the dubitative cognition, 'It may be a post or a man.'"

a man" reveals the object in the dual form of "post" and "man". Similarly, when we say, "This is a cow," our cognition, according to the Bhāṭṭas, reveals the object in the dual form of the generic attribute and the individual object. Maṇḍana argues that just as a dubitative cognition is declared erroneous on the ground that it reveals incompatible factors in the same thing, the cognition of an object as a universal-particular must also be declared erroneous for no other reason than that it affirms incompatible factors in one and the same thing.<sup>59</sup>

It may be argued that Maṇḍana's comparison of the cognition of an object as a universal-particular with dubitative cognition is unsound as there is an important point of difference between the two. In the one case we cognize an object as a universal *and* a particular, *i.e.* our judgment is *conjunctive*. In the case of dubitative cognition, there are alternative predications. We say that the object may be either a post or a man, and not both a post and a man. In other words, the dubitative cognition is expressed in a *disjunctive* proposition. Since the judgment is conjunctive in the one case and disjunctive in the other, the two cannot be placed on the same footing. If so, the comparison between the cognition of an object as both universal and particular and dubitative cognition, it may be urged, is unsound.

Maṇḍana contends that his criticism of the Bhāṭṭa conception of an object as dual in form still holds good. It is true that in a dubitative cognition there is no simultaneous predication of two forms. The two forms are predicated of the object alternatively: that is to say, it is a post in one state, and a man in another state. The difficulty here is that, the nature of a thing being what

59. BS, Part I, p. 63. See also Part II, p. 169.

it is, it cannot be one thing now (say, a post) and something else (say, a man) at a different time; and so the dubitative cognition has to be rejected as erroneous. Maṇḍana applies the same logic to the Bhāṭṭa account. How can that which is a generic attribute be an individual object at the same time or even subsequently? An object cannot change its nature and become something else.<sup>60</sup> If an object is a lamp-post, it cannot also be a man. Similarly, if an object is a universal, it cannot also be a particular. So the Bhāṭṭa view that every object is both a universal and a particular, that every object is a one-many, is untenable.

According to the Bhāṭṭas, the generic attribute and the individual object are identical as well as different, *i.e.* they explain the relation between these two in terms of difference-cum-identity. If so, it is necessary to know how they define difference and identity. And we have to examine the relation between the generic attribute and individual object in the light of these definitions.

Difference may be defined as mutual exclusion (*rūpa-virodha*) or mutual non-existence (*anyonyābhāva*). Identity or non-difference may be defined in the opposite way as absence of mutual exclusion or mutual non-existence. Let us now apply these definitions to the generic attribute and the individual object. If the generic attribute and the individual object are mutually exclusive like a pot and a cloth, then they are not identical. If so, the Bhāṭṭas are at liberty to say that they are different. With a view to show that the generic attribute and the individual object are identical, the Bhāṭṭas could fall back upon the other definition and argue that the generic attribute and the individual object are not mutually exclusive, because by being placed in grammatical co-

60. See BS, Part II, p. 169: "na hi vastu vikalpyate."

ordination they are cognized as non-different. In that case, it could be said that they are one or identical. If so, they should not be treated as different. In short, the Bhāṭṭas could say either that the generic attribute and the individual object are different, or they could say that they are identical. But it is wrong to say that they are both identical and different.<sup>61</sup>

The Bhāṭṭas may define difference and identity in a different way in order to justify their standpoint. There is difference, if cognitions differ;<sup>62</sup> and there is oneness, if the cognition is identical. Since both the generic attribute and the individual objects are cognized by one and the same cognition, they are, the Bhāṭṭas may say, identical. They are also different, because the cognition of the generic attribute is different from the cognition of the individual object. Maṇḍana observes that the difficulty mentioned above cannot be got over by relying on these definitions. By applying these definitions the Bhāṭṭas may say that the generic attribute and the individual object are either identical or different, and not both. The definition of difference may be stated in a different way as follows: there is difference between two objects, if they are cognized by different cognitions and are also mutually non-existent. If a cow and a horse are treated as different, it is because of the fact that they are not only apprehended by different cognitions, but they are also mutually non-existent. Here both the characteristics of the definition mentioned above are present. Maṇḍana argues that the application of this definition of difference to the generic attribute and the individual object will be detrimental to the standpoint of the Bhāṭṭas. It will only prove the oneness of the generic attribute and the

61. BS, Part I, p. 64.

62. "buddheḥ rūpabhedāt dvitvam."

individual object, and not their difference, because both the characteristics of difference mentioned above are not present here.<sup>63</sup>

The Bhāṭṭas claim that their position is different from that of the Vaiśeṣikas, who are uncompromising advocates of difference among the objects. According to them, things are different in so far as they are cognized as "This is one, and that is another"; they are also identical at the same time inasmuch as they are cognized as "This is not other than that". So unlike the Vaiśeṣikas, the Bhāṭṭas hold the view that things are different while being the same. Maṇḍana says that a careful examination of the Bhāṭṭa view will show that it is not different from the Vaiśeṣika view.

According to the Bhāṭṭas, the generic attribute alone does not constitute the nature of a thing; nor does the particular alone constitute the nature of a thing. On the contrary, the generic attribute and the individual unit, the universal and the particular, constitute the nature of a thing. It means that every object is a blend (*śabala*) of two factors, the universal and the particular. Maṇḍana argues that this explanation of the nature of an object will only prove that objects are different. Of the two factors which together constitute the nature of an object, the generic attribute, being the element of *anuvṛtti*, will be common to several objects; but the particular or the specific feature of an object, which is the element of *vyāvṛtti*, is not so. Since both the universal and the particular which constitute the nature of an object are not to be found together in another object, objects are different.<sup>64</sup>

63. BS, Part I, p. 65.

64. BS, Part I, p. 66: "tasmāt sambhinnobhayarūpaḥ śabalavastvātmā; na ca śabalasyānyatrānugamaḥ; yasya tu anugamaḥ sa vasturūpaḥ na bhavati."

The Bhāṭṭas may argue in a different way to show that their position is different from that of the Vaiśeṣikas. A part is neither different from nor identical with the whole. If it is totally different from the whole, it would cease to be a part; if it is the same as the whole, even then it would cease to be a part. Since a part is not different from the whole, it must be said, so the Bhāṭṭas may argue, that when the generic attribute of an object, which is a part, is identically present in another object, the whole object is identically present in the other object. So objects are identical. This argument, Maṇḍana observes, will not hold good. If the identity of objects can be shown from the identity of the generic attribute inherent in them, their difference may also be argued on the basis of the difference among the individual units or the particulars. The reason for this is that the particular is as much a part of an object which is a whole, as the generic attribute. Moreover, that the Bhāṭṭa view is unsound, can be shown in a different way. When an object is said to be in the dual form as generic attribute-cum-individual unit, it is necessary to know how the generic attribute and the individual unit are related. Is an object in the dual form of generic attribute and individual unit, the two depending upon each other? Or, is an object an aggregate or collection of the generic attribute and the individual unit, the two being independent of each other? If the former alternative is accepted, it will only prove difference among objects. This point needs a brief explanation. Let us say that a generic attribute (say, A), depending upon a particular individual unit (say, B) in which it is contained, constitutes, in association with that, the nature of an object (AB). But the same generic attribute (A) in combination with another individual unit (say, C), in which it is contained, constitutes, in association with that, the nature of that object (AC). If so, object AB is different from object AC. It is only when a generic attribute and an individual



unit, which in mutual dependence constitute the dual form of an object, are together present in another object, the two objects could be said to be identical. In so far as this is not the case, objects are different. Let us now consider the other alternative. If the generic attribute and the individual unit are mutually independent and if an object is only an aggregate of the two, then it is an abuse of language to say that one object is in the dual form, and the conception of a thing as an inextricable blend of two forms falls to the ground. So the Bhāṭṭa view that objects are different while being the same is untenable. The Bhāṭṭa doctrine of identity in difference is only the theory of difference in a disguised form. If the Bhāṭṭas are dissatisfied with the theory of absolute difference, it is open to them to accept the other alternative, *viz* the theory of non-difference among objects. A position mid-way between these two alternatives championed by the Bhāṭṭas does not satisfy the demands of reason.<sup>65</sup>

## 9

According to the Jainas, every object has two aspects. It has a permanent aspect known as substance (*dravya*); it has also changing forms known as modes (*parvāya*).<sup>66</sup> An object endures because of the permanent factor; at the same time it undergoes change or modification because of the changing factors. For example, gold is the enduring substance, while necklace, bracelet and other objects which we make from gold are the changing modes. The Jainas hold the view that the relation between the enduring substance and the changing mode is difference-cum-identity. When an

65. *BS*, Part I, p. 67.

66. See M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 160-161.

ingot of gold is shaped into a necklace, the substance "gold" endures in it. Nevertheless, it is wrong to say that it is gold itself. If that were gold itself, its destruction would mean the destruction of gold with the result that gold should not be seen enduring in some other mode, say a bracelet. As a matter of fact, gold persists even in the bracelet. Just because it is not identical with gold, it should not be said that it is different therefrom; for we do not see them as different. It is gold itself that is in the form of bracelet. So the Jainas hold the view that substance and mode are different while being the same. Every object has a dual form: it is a substance-cum-mode.

According to Maṇḍana, the criticisms levelled against the Bhāṭṭa view of object also hold good in the present case. It is not necessary to repeat them once again. The basic difficulty is with regard to the dual form of object as substance and mode. An object may be said to be either a *dravya* or a *pariyāya*; it cannot be both at the same time.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, the view that every object is of the nature of both substance and mode is formulated in accordance with the doctrine of *anekāntavāda* or relative pluralism which the Jainas uphold. According to this doctrine, every object can be looked at from different points of view. It is *dravya* from one point of view, and *pariyāya* from another point of view. Both these forms are true, but true not absolutely, but only relatively, since they are expressed from different points of view. Since every object, being complex, has different forms (*anekānta*), our judgment about it must be relative and not absolute. Maṇḍana brings out the unsatisfactory nature of *anekāntavāda* by drawing pointed attention to

67. BS, Part I, verse 23, p. 68.

the danger that lurks therein from the practical standpoint. If an object does not have a fixed or determinate nature, a person will not be inclined to pursue it in spite of what he thinks of it favourably at that time, because it can also be other than what it is from another point of view. Nor will any one avoid an object considering it to be baneful, for it can also be different from what it is when viewed from another point of view. It means that a person cannot transact his business of life on the basis of *anekāntavāda*. Without any scope for *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, our day-to-day life will come to a standstill, if we are to follow the Jaina doctrine.<sup>68</sup>

## 10

Buddhism and Advaita hold diametrically opposed views on the question of oneness and difference. According to Buddhism while difference is real, oneness or identity is illusory. It denies the reality of the generic attribute which is supposed to be the element of identity running through the individual objects. The illusion of the generic attribute, according to Buddhism, arises because of the incapacity of the person to apprehend the individual units of experience as different from one another. There is the well-known case of "trees" being cognized as "forest".<sup>69</sup> The individual trees which are different from one another are the objects of experience; but we cognize them as identical, and refer to them as "forest" as if they are one. While difference among trees is real, their oneness as conveyed by the expression "forest" is illusory. So Buddhism concludes that oneness which is illusory is superimposed on difference which is

68. *Ibid.*, verse 15, p. 69.

69. See *BS*, Part I, p. 60: "*dr̥ṣṭā hi bhinneṣvabhedakalpanā 'vanam' iti.*"

real. Advaita holds just the opposite view. It maintains that, while reality is one, difference is an illusion due to *avidyā*. The individual objects are but appearances superimposed on Brahman; which is real. The moon which is one appears to be many, when it is reflected in the waves of the water. In the same way, the one reality appears to be many due to the limiting adjuncts. So, while Buddhism says that difference on which oneness is superimposed is real, Advaita maintains that oneness on which difference is superimposed is real.

The Bauddha view stated above is untenable. Just as shell serves as the ground on which silver is superimposed, even so difference, if what Buddhism says is true, should serve as the ground for oneness to be superimposed thereon. But the difficulty here is that it is impossible to show that difference which is to serve as the ground is cognized. We have already shown how the notion of difference involves negation, and also how the *pratiyogin* and the *anuyogin* must be apprehended as distinct from each other for establishing negation. Maṇḍana says that the attempt to explain the cognition of difference involves the fallacy of mutual dependence: the cognition of difference requires the prior cognition of the *pratiyogin* and the *anuyogin* as distinct from each other; and to cognize them as distinct entities, difference which is mutual negation is presupposed. Since the cognition of difference cannot be explained in terms of any *pramāṇa*, difference, says Maṇḍana, is not cognized; and since it is not cognized, it cannot serve as the ground (*upādāna*) for the superimposition of oneness thereon.<sup>70</sup> Maṇḍana observes that the difficulty which Buddhism has to face in this regard does not arise in the case of Advaita. Unlike the cognition of difference which presupposes the

70. BS, Part I, p. 70: "na ca agrhīto bhedo'bhedakalpanāyā upādānaṁ bhavati."

cognition of distinct entities (*viz pratiyogin* and *anuyogin*), the cognition of oneness or non-difference does not require the cognition of oneness. It also does not require the cognition of difference.<sup>71</sup> Since the cognition of oneness is quite possible in its own way, it serves as the ground for the superimposition of difference thereon. Maṇḍana gives an illustration to substantiate his point. We apprehend a pot which is one. But failing to determine its oneness, we look upon it as constituted by a number of different parts. In this case, the pot which is one and which is also a whole serves as the ground for the superimposition of the parts thereon.

Maṇḍana refers to a possible objection that may be raised against his explanation. A whole is not possible without the parts, for it is only the parts which constitute a whole. The parts, however, could exist independently of the whole. It is, therefore, wrong to say, so it may be argued, that a pot which is a whole serves as the ground for the superimposition of the parts thereon. On the contrary, the whole which is one is superimposed on the parts which are many. If so, Maṇḍana's contention that difference, being illusory, is superimposed on oneness is, it may be argued, untenable. Maṇḍana remarks that this objection is really without any force. This objection, though intended to show that the Advaita explanation is untenable, indeed, undermines its own position by reducing itself to absurdity. Let us grant for the sake of argument that a whole which is one is illusory, while its component parts alone which are different from one another are real. On this account, a pot which is a whole is illusory, while its component parts are real. Each component part, in its turn, is a whole consisting of many parts;

71. *Ibid.*: *na caivaṁ abhedagrahamabhedagrahaṇāpekṣam; nāpi bhedagrahaṇāpekṣam.*"

and applying the principle according to which a whole is illusory, while its component parts are real, it may also be declared to be illusory. If we pursue this analysis further and show that each component part, however small, is illusory because it is itself a whole consisting of parts, at one stage we have to bring in a dyad (*dvyanuka*) which is a compound of two atoms. Being a whole, it must also be treated as illusory, while its parts, *viz* the atoms, must be taken to be real. The atoms are partless (*niravayava*); and so they do not admit of further division. The point to be noted here is that an object which is not cognized cannot be the ground for the superimposition of something thereon; and since the atoms cannot be perceived, they cannot serve as the ground for the superimposition of oneness thereon. If so, the thesis that the parts which are different are real, while a whole which is one is an illusory superimposition thereon, stands self-condemned.<sup>72</sup>

There are also other reasons in support of the Advaita position in this regard. We see an object as an existent something, as a bare entity, in indeterminate perception, which comes first. The object, that is to say, is cognized in indeterminate perception as a unity (*ekam*), as an undifferentiated entity (*abhinnam*). But in determinate perception which follows it, we cognize the object as a differentiated entity, *i.e.* an undifferentiated entity comes to be differentiated by the specific features which are predicated of it.<sup>73</sup> It is, therefore, proper to say, argues Maṇḍana, that difference is a superimposition on oneness which alone is real. There is yet another point in favour of the Advaita explanation. The cognition of

72. BS, Part I, p. 70.

73. BS, Part I, p. 71: "*vastumātraviśayaṁ prathamamavikalpakam pratyakṣam ; tatpūrvāstu vikalpabuddhayo viśeṣaṇāvagāhanta iti sarvapratyātmavedanīyam.*"

an object as something existent, as a "this", is constant and unalterable (*avyabhiçāri*). It has no sublation. But our cognition of the differentiating features of an object is not constant. Consider the following case. The object in front is first cognized as silver; subsequently it is cognized as shell. The subsequent cognition sublates the earlier cognition; but the sublation is only with regard to our cognition of it as silver. Of the subject and the predicate of the earlier cognition, only the predicate is sublated and not the subject. The subject, *viz* "this", is unalterably present even in the subsequent cognition. It means that, while our cognition of the specific character of the object as silver is not constant, our cognition of it as an undifferentiated entity is constant. There is no sublation to the "thisness" of an object, but only to its "whatness". The "thisness" is always present and cognized whatever be the specific feature predicated of an object. Maṇḍana observes that, since only the specific character of an object which accounts for difference is inconstant, it alone must be taken to be illusory. It follows that our cognition of difference alone is illusory and not that of oneness.<sup>74</sup> That difference is illusorily superimposed on oneness which is real can be proved by means of the following inference. Wherever there is diversity, there is oneness which serves as the substratum therefor; *e.g.* the difference in the faces which are reflected in a jewel, a sword, etc., though the original face, of which they are reflections, is one; there is diversity in the world; and so the diversity which is seen in the world has for its substratum oneness on which it is superimposed.<sup>75</sup>

It may be argued that the Baudddha view, *viz* that diversity is real on which oneness is illusorily superim-

74. *BS*, Part I, p. 71.

75. See *BS*, Part II, p. 181.

posed, can also be proved syllogistically. Consider the following argument. Wherever there is oneness, there is diversity which serves as the substratum therefor; *e.g.* the oneness of "forest" has for its substratum the "trees" which are different; there is oneness in the world; consequently the oneness which is seen in the world has for its substratum difference on which it is superimposed.<sup>76</sup> This argument, Maṇḍana says, is untenable. If oneness is illusory, it will not be possible for us to treat anything which is one as real. Consequently, an atom (*paramāṇu*) which is one cannot be said to be real, for its oneness is on the same footing with the oneness of "forest". Just as the oneness of "forest" is said to be an illusory appearance superimposed on the difference among trees, even so the oneness of an atom, we have to say, is an illusory appearance superimposed on the different parts of an atom. This is on the face of it absurd, because an atom is partless. If we accept the contention of the critics, we can never point to anything as one and treat it as real. In the absence of anything to be reckoned as one, how can there be diversity? And in the absence of diversity, how is it possible to say that oneness is an illusory appearance superimposed on difference, which is real?<sup>77</sup> Moreover, that difference among objects is illusory while oneness is real, can be proved by the following syllogistic reasoning: wherever there is cognition in the identical form with regard to every object, the difference among objects is illusory; *e.g.* the difference among the images of the moon reflected in the waves of the water is illusory, for every image is cognized in the identical form as moon; objects supposed to be different from one an-

76. *Ibid.*

77. *BS*, Part II, p. 72.



other are cognized in identical form in each case; consequently, the difference among objects is illusory.<sup>78</sup>

Though objects may differ from one another with regard to their specific features, all of them are cognized in an identical form as "existent" (*sat*), or as "this" (*idam*), or as "that" (*tat*), or as "object" (*vastu*). When the moon which is one is reflected in the waves of the water, there are several reflections which are different from one another. But every one of its several images is cognized in the identical form as moon. While the identity or oneness of the images is the truth, their difference is illusory. In the same way, since every one of the several objects of our experience is cognized in the identical form as *sat*, *idam*, etc., we say that the difference among objects is illusory, while their identity or sameness is the reality.<sup>79</sup>

78. *BS*, Part II, p. 181.

79. *BS*, Part I, p. 72.

## CHAPTER V

### AVIDYĀ

#### 1

Every philosophical system is based on one or more key concepts. Substance-attribute relation is the basic concept in Nyāyā-Vaiśeṣika. While *aprthak-siddhi* relation is a key-concept in Viśiṣṭādvaita, *viśeṣa* and *bheda* are the key concepts in Dvaita Vedānta. *Avidyā*, which is also called *māyā*, is the basic concept through which Advaita works out its metaphysics, epistemology, and ethical discipline. The distinction between Brahman as *nirguṇa* and Brahman as *saguṇa*, the apparent difference between Brahman and the individual soul, and the problem of the One appearing as many, which are important issues in the metaphysics of Advaita, presuppose the concept of *avidyā*. In the same way, the subject-object epistemology involving the distinctions of the knower, the known, and the resulting knowledge, and the theory of *vivarta* in terms of which the problem of error is explained, presuppose the concept of *avidyā*. If Advaita insists that knowledge, and knowledge alone, is the direct means to release, it is because of the fact that *avidyā*, which is the root cause of bondage of the individual soul, can be removed only by knowledge. The ethical discipline which Advaita formulates for attaining release is meaningful only when it is viewed in the context of *avidyā*. It is, therefore, no wonder that *avidyā* has been characterized as the corner-stone of Advaita.

Maṇḍana uses the terms *avidyā* and *māyā* as synonyms. *Avidyā-māyā* which is responsible for the appearance of the world of plurality as well as finite individuals is spoken of as *pradhāna* (the primary germ), as *avyakta* (the unmanifested), as *ajñāna* (nescience), as *prakṛti* (the material cause), and as *tamas* (darkness). Scripture lends support to the Advaita view of *avidyā*. The *Nāsadiya-sūkta* says : " There was no *asat*, there was no *sat* ",<sup>1</sup> and this text conveys that *avidyā* is indeterminable as *sat* and also as *asat*. Again, it says ; " Darkness (*tamas*) existed. " <sup>2</sup> The " darkness " mentioned in this text is only *avidyā*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says : " Indra (*i.e.* the Lord) on account of *māyā* is perceived as manifold. " <sup>3</sup> While this passage brings out the projective power of *avidyā*, a text from the *Chāndogya* refers to the power of concealment of *avidyā*. It says : " Just as those who do not know the field walk again and again over the hidden treasure of gold and do not find it, even so all creatures here go day after day into the world of Brahman, and yet do not find it, for they are concealed by the untrue (*anṛtena*). " <sup>4</sup> The word "*anṛta*" here means *avidyā*. We are told in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, " Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance ; thereby mortals are deluded. " <sup>5</sup> The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* declares : " All this, the Maker (who has *māyā*), creates ; and the other (*i.e.* the individual soul) is confined by *māyā*. " <sup>6</sup> It further says : " Know then that *prakṛti* is *māyā*, and the wielder of *māyā* is the great Lord. " <sup>7</sup> The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says : " The unmanifested

1. *Rg-veda-saṃhitā*, X, 129, 1.

2. *Ibid.*, X, 129, 3.

3. II, v, 19.

4. *CU*, VIII, iii, 2.

5. *BG*, V, 15.

6. IV, 9.

7. IV, 10.

(*avyakta*) is superior to *mahat*.”<sup>8</sup> *Avyakta* that is spoken of here is the root ignorance (*mūlājñāna*) which is the cause of everything in the world. Though *avidyā* is the root cause of everything, it is not caused or originated by anything else; and so it is beginningless. That is why the *Upaniṣad* says: “*Māyā*, i.e. *avidyā*, comes of its own accord.”<sup>9</sup> Taking its stand on the authority of *śruti* and *smṛti*, Advaita explains the nature and work of *avidyā*. The following are the important characteristics of *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is beginningless (*anādi*). Since it is different from both real and unreal, it is said to be indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*), an illusory appearance (*mithyā*). Moreover, it is something positive, i.e. of the nature of an existent (*bhāvarūpa*). It has two functions—concealment and projection. By the former it suppresses the truth, and by the latter it suggests the false. Though it is beginningless, it has an end, because it is removable by right knowledge.

## 2

Critics argue that the Advaita explanation of the nature of *avidyā* and its disappearance at the advent of right knowledge is not satisfactory. They also criticize the Advaita explanation of the relation between Brahman and *avidyā*. Maṇḍana prefaces his exposition of the doctrine of *avidyā* with a reference to the objections raised by the Bauddhas against the concept of *avidyā*.

Advaita holds the view that Brahman is of the nature of knowledge, and that the realization of Brahman which is knowledge is release. It maintains that Brahman alone is, and that it is one and non-dual. The Mādhyanikas

8. II, iii, 6.

9. *Nṛsiṃhpūrvatāpinīyupaniṣad*, IX, 3.

and the Yogācāras argue that the Advaita explanation of the nature of *avidyā* and its relation to Brahman is replete with difficulties. The critics argue that Brahman may be understood as of the nature of knowledge (*vidyā-svabhāvam*), or of the nature of ignorance (*avidyā-svabhāvam*), or of the nature of both. In whatever way it is understood, the explanation of the relation between Brahman and *avidyā*, according to the critics, bristles with contradictions and difficulties. If Brahman is of the nature of knowledge, there is no need to make efforts for the removal of *avidyā*. The reason for this is obvious. Since knowledge and ignorance are opposed to each other like light and darkness, the presence of the one implies the absence of the other. If Brahman is eternal and infinite knowledge, *avidyā* does not and cannot exist. Consequently, the question of removal of *avidyā* does not arise; and also there is no problem of attaining knowledge, since Brahman which is of the nature of knowledge is ever-existent. Moreover, scripture also will become futile. Scripture tells us what we ought to attain and what we ought to remove. If Brahman is of the nature of knowledge, there is no need for us to seek the help of scripture, because the liberating knowledge which ought to be attained is always present, and *avidyā* which has to be removed is always absent. There is also another difficulty. If scripture becomes superfluous, human activities which are performed in accordance with their instructions are also in vain. The second alternative, the critics argue, fares no better. If Brahman is of the nature of ignorance, the latter cannot be removed, for it is impossible to give up or alter one's nature. Consequently, scriptural texts and their teachings as well as human activities, undertaken and performed in accordance with their teachings, are purposeless. The third alternative, the critics argue, is logically untenable, because it admits the possibility of knowledge and ignorance which are opposed to each

other co-existing in the same place. If knowledge and ignorance can co-exist in the same place, they are not mutually exclusive with the result that *avidyā* cannot be destroyed by knowledge. Nor are human efforts needed in order to attain the saving knowledge, for the latter is ever-existent. In other words, the objection that the instructions of scripture and the ensuing human activities are in vain still holds good. It may be argued that scripture and the ensuing human activities are not futile on the ground that *avidyā*, though beginningless, has an end in that it disappears at the advent of knowledge. This argument, the critics observe, is of no avail. The critics place the Advaitin on the horns of a dilemma. Either *avidyā* constitutes the nature of Brahman or not. If it constitutes the nature of Brahman, it is eternal inasmuch as Brahman is eternal; and so it cannot be terminated. If it does not constitute the nature of Brahman, it is something other than Brahman, and hence dualism arises.

Moreover, difficulties arise whether *avidyā* is understood negatively as non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*), or positively as misapprehension (*viparyaya-graṇa*). If Brahman is eternal, self-luminous knowledge, there cannot be *avidyā* in it in the sense of non-apprehension. Nor is it consistent with non-dualism to say that, though Brahman knows itself, it is subject to non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) of things which are different from it. If *avidyā* is understood positively as mis-apprehension (*viparyaya-graṇa*), either it must be identical with Brahman or different from it. If it is identical with Brahman which is eternal, it cannot be removed. If it is different from Brahman, there arises dualism, for in addition to Brahman there is *avidyā*. The critics, therefore, maintain that the Advaita explanation of the relation between Brahman and *avidyā* is not satisfactory.<sup>10</sup>

10. BS, Part I, pp. 8-9.

3

Maṇḍana refutes the objections stated above and shows that the criticism that the scriptural instructions and the ensuing human activities are futile does not hold good, because *avidyā* can be removed. That *avidyā* can be destroyed is accepted by all schools of thought. He also shows that the objections, plausible as they seem to be, do not affect the fundamental thesis of Advaita. The Advaitin, Maṇḍana says, need not confront the horns of a dilemma, as an explanation of *avidyā* in a different way is quite possible.

According to Maṇḍana, *avidyā* is not of the nature of Brahman. Nor is it something other than Brahman. It is neither real (*sat*) nor unreal (*asat*). It is thus known as *māyā* or *mithyāvabhāsa* (illusory appearance). *Avidyā* does not constitute the nature of Brahman, because the latter is self-luminous, all-revealing, eternal knowledge or consciousness opposed to *avidyā*. It cannot be something other than Brahman, because there is no second to Brahman. Further, if it is something other than Brahman, it would be a limit to Brahman. But Brahman is infinite. If *avidyā* constitutes the nature of Brahman, it must be real (*sat*). In that case it cannot be called *avidyā*. Just because *avidyā* cannot be characterized as *sat*, we cannot go to the other extreme and say that it is unreal (*asat*). If it is totally unreal or non-existent (*atyantāsat*) like the sky-flower, it should not be helpful in our day-to-day life. Since the empirical world is the product of *avidyā*, the latter cannot be *asat*. To characterize *avidyā* as real-unreal (*sadasat*) is to violate the law of contradiction. Thus, if *avidyā* exists, it will constitute a limit to Brahman. And if it does not exist, the appearance of the world cannot be accounted for. It is real enough to produce the world; at the same time it is not real enough to constitute a limit to Brahman. It is neither

real as Brahman, nor unreal like the sky-flower. It is, therefore, treated as what is different from both real and unreal (*sadasad-vilakṣaṇa*). Since it cannot be determined as either real or unreal, it is characterized as *anirvacanīya*. When the Advaitin characterizes *avidyā* as *anirvacanīya*, it is to emphasize that any explanation of it as real (*sat*), or unreal (*asat*), or real-unreal (*sadasat*) is not logically tenable.<sup>11</sup> According to Advaita, *avidyā* which is neither real nor unreal has a unique ontological status. In this respect what is true of *avidyā* is also true of the world which is a product of *avidyā*.

According to Advaita, neither the criterion of the real nor that of the unreal can be applied to *avidyā*. What is real (*sat*) never suffers sublation. But since *avidyā* is removable by knowledge, it is not real. What is unreal (*asat*), e.g. the sky-flower, is never experienced. But since *avidyā* is an object of our experience, it is not unreal. Since neither the criterion of the real, nor that of the unreal, holds good in the case of *avidyā*, it is said to be different from both real and unreal. This explanation of the nature of *avidyā* is not acceptable to the critic. Instead of saying that *avidyā* is different from both real and unreal, it may be characterized, the critic argues, as both real and unreal (*sadasat*), by formulating the criteria of real and unreal in a different way. The criteria as formulated by the critic are: (1) what is experienced is real, and (2) what suffers contradiction is unreal. Since *avidyā* is experienced, it is real; and since it is sublated it is unreal. So in terms of these criteria, *avidyā*, the critic argues, may be characterized as of the nature of both real and unreal. This argument is untenable. First of all, there is no example in support of the criterion that what is experienced or cognized is

11. *Ibid.*, p. 9.



real.<sup>12</sup> It cannot be said that the criterion holds good in the case of Brahman. Since Brahman is knowledge by its very nature, it is not what is experienced or cognized. Nor is it possible to cite objects like pot as instances which fulfil the criterion. Far from accepting the reality of these objects, Advaita maintains that these objects are illusory, because they are experienced or cognized. The reasoning in support of this view may be stated as follows: pot and other objects are illusory, because they are experienced or cognized; and whatever is experienced or cognized is illusory, e.g. the rope-serpent. Secondly, the criterion that what is unreal (*asat*) suffers contradiction is wrong. What is unreal, e.g. the sky-flower, is never experienced, and it is absurd to speak of contradiction or sublation of what is never experienced or cognized. Instead of saying that what suffers contradiction is unreal, we have to say that what is never experienced or cognized is unreal. So, it is wrong to say that *avidyā* is both real and unreal (*sadasat*).

Maṇḍana contends that *avidyā* has to be characterized only in this way as *anirvacanīya* by other schools of thought as well. He elucidates his contention with reference to the schools of Buddhism. If the world is as it is seen, it is real (*sat*). But that which is real, according to the Sūnyavādin, should not depend on anything else for its existence and origination. Since the world has a dependent existence, it is not real. Because it is not real, we cannot say that it is unreal (*asat*). An unreal entity like the sky-flower is not helpful in our day-to-day life (*vyavahārāṅga*). But the world we know is useful to us in our business of life. Since the world of things cannot be described as either real or unreal, it is *avidyā* which is *anirvacanīya*.<sup>13</sup> For the Vijñānavādin, the external world

12. ŚSBV, p. 287.

13. See Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 239 and 241. "He (Nāgārjuna) confines himself to reducing every positive

is a mental construct. An external object is not different from the consciousness of the object. The blue colour and the consciousness of the blue colour are identical, because they are never perceived to exist separately. If objects appearing outside as blue and yellow, tall and short, etc. are states of consciousness (*jñānasatbhāva*) which is the only reality, they cannot be denied, and therefore they are real (*sat*). The Vijñānavādin, however, is not prepared to accept that the world of things appearing outside is real. Nor can it be characterized as unreal (*asat*). If external objects are entirely unreal, the affirmation that they appear outside is not consistent. So even to the Vijñānavādin, the world of things which cannot be characterized as either real or unreal is *avidyā*, which is *anirvacanīya*. The Sautrāntikas and the Vaibhāṣikas too have to explain the nature of *avidyā* as *anirvacanīya*. Though they admit the reality of objects seen outside, they have to say that the appearance of silver in a shell, the thought of permanence in things ephemeral, cannot be real (*sat*). Just because they are not real, they cannot be treated as unreal (*asat*). If the things of the world are totally unreal like the sky-flower, they will not be helpful to us in our day-to-day life. So the things of the world, even according to the Bauddha realists, must be characterized as *avidyā* which is *anirvacanīya*.<sup>14</sup>

assertion to absurdity, thus showing that the intellect condemns itself as inadequate just as it finds hopeless antinomies in the world of experience..." "He held (according to Bhavaviveka's exposition of Nāgārjuna) that the world of phenomena was phenomenally valid, though from the point of view of absolute truth unreal." "Whatever it (the world) be in ultimate analysis, it must be practically treated as if it were real..."

Though *avidyā* is beginningless (*anādi*), it has an end, i.e. *avidyā* which is neither *sat* nor *asat* can be removed. By its very nature, it is impermanent and unstable (*adr̥ḍhasvabhāva*). It is only an illusory appearance, and so it admits of negation. If it is permanent by its very nature, it cannot be removed. *Avidyā* is not a void, a total nothing. If that were the case, it has negated itself; there would be then no *saṁsāra*, and consequently no need for any effort to attain release. Such a standpoint would make scripture futile. Since *avidyā* has to be removed for the purpose of terminating the cycle of births and deaths, there is need for scripture. Further, the existence of *avidyā* does not constitute a threat to non-dualism, for *avidyā* is not real enough to be a limit to Brahman.<sup>15</sup>

Reference was made earlier to the two powers of *avidyā*—the power of concealment and the power of projection. *Avidyā* not only conceals Brahman which is of the nature of knowledge, but also projects the world of plurality which is insentient. The concealment of Brahman, the critic argues, will amount to the destruction of Brahman. Brahman, according to Advaita, is of the nature of consciousness which is self-luminous; the nature of consciousness, that is to say, is not an attribute of Brahman; rather it constitutes the essential nature of Brahman. The critic argues that concealment of consciousness may mean either obstructing the origination of consciousness or destroying consciousness that exists.<sup>16</sup> The first alternative, the critic says, is not possible, for, according to Advaita, there is no origination for cons-

15. *Ibid.*

16. See Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣyam*, p. 168 : “*avidyayā prakāśaika-svarūpaṁ brahma tirohitaṁ iti vadatā svarūpanāśa evoktaḥ syāt. prakāśatirodhānaṁ nāma prakāśotpattipratibandhaḥ, vidyamānasya vināśo vā.*”

ciousness. Only if there is origination for consciousness, one can think of some obstruction to its origination. So the first alternative has to be ruled out. But the second alternative, the critic says, holds good. Hiding or concealing consciousness, which is the essential nature of Brahman, means causing the absence of consciousness; *i.e.* because of the concealment by *avidyā*, what is self-luminous consciousness ceases to be; and so concealment here means the loss of the essential nature of Brahman. To say that there is the loss of the essential nature of Brahman through *avidyā*, an outside agency, is to say that there is the loss of Brahman itself. The Advaitin, the critic argues, could at least save Brahman if he is prepared to admit that consciousness is only an attribute of Brahman, for the loss of an attribute does not mean the loss of the thing of which it is an attribute; but the loss of the essential nature of a thing means the loss of the thing itself. The critic, therefore, concludes that since consciousness, according to the Advaitin, is the essential nature of Brahman, its concealment by *avidyā* can only mean the loss of Brahman itself.

This argument is untenable. Consider the case of an object which has been concealed from me. When some one asks me whether I know that object, I reply that I do not know its existence, and that I do not see it, because it has been concealed from me. It does not follow from this that there is loss of that object. The same thing may be said of Brahman. When Brahman is concealed by *avidyā*, I am not able to say that it exists or that it is directly seen by me. It means that it is not an object of knowledge in the sense that its existence is not known to me, or that it is not directly perceived by me. It does not, however, mean that there is loss of Brahman because of its concealment by *avidyā*. When the veil of *avidyā* is removed through knowledge, one will claim that Brahman exists or that it is directly seen.

It must be borne in mind that this explanation of the work of *avidyā* is given from the relative standpoint of *vyavahāra*. From the absolute standpoint, there is no *avidyā* at all, and Brahman alone is; if so, Brahman is neither concealed nor destroyed by *avidyā*.

One may argue that there is a basic difference between the concealment of Brahman and the concealment of other objects. Everything other than Brahman, according to Advaita, is insentient. Consider the case of the concealment of a pot. It is no doubt true that the concealment of a pot does not mean loss or destruction of a pot. But the position is different in the case of Brahman which is of the nature of self-luminous knowledge or consciousness. If the Advaitin admits the possibility of concealment of Brahman-knowledge by *avidyā*, it can only mean, the critic may argue, the loss or destruction of Brahman-knowledge, for knowledge and ignorance, according to Advaita, are mutually exclusive like light and darkness.

This argument is not convincing. It may be stated here first of all that the point at issue is not the difference between Brahman which is knowledge or consciousness by nature and other objects which are insentient, for this difference is accepted by Advaita. Secondly, it is also true, according to Advaita, that knowledge (*jñāna*) and ignorance (*ajñāna*) are mutually opposed like light and darkness. A little clarification of the second point, however, is necessary to do justice to the standpoint of Advaita. Advaita makes a distinction between *svārūpa-jñāna* which is Brahman and *vr̥tti-jñāna* which is cognition or knowledge through the mental mode. When Advaita says that knowledge is opposed to ignorance, the knowledge that is spoken of here is *vr̥tti-jñāna* and not *svārūpa-jñāna*. Brahman which is knowledge by nature (*svārūpa-jñāna*) is not opposed to *avidyā*. If the two are opposed to each other, there is some substance

in the criticism that the concealment of Brahman-knowledge by *avidyā* amounts to the destruction or loss of Brahman-knowledge. Far from being opposed to *avidyā*, Brahman-knowledge is helpful to it by revealing it. If we say that there is *avidyā*, that it conceals Brahman-knowledge, and so on, it is only through Brahman-knowledge. So Brahman-knowledge and *avidyā* are related as the revealer and the revealed.<sup>17</sup> When *avidyā*, though revealed by Brahman, conceals it, we say that Brahman is not known; and when *avidyā* is removed by the unitary cognition through mental mode (*akhaṇḍākāravṛttijñāna*), we say that Brahman is known. Just as we say that a pot is known or not known, even so we say that Brahman is known or not known. These two, i.e. its being known and not known, presuppose *avidyā*; by assuming the existence of *avidyā* and its work of concealment, we say that Brahman is not known, and by assuming *avidyā* and its removal we say that Brahman is known. Further, our claim that Brahman is known or that it is not known, is based on the work of the internal organ. In other words, one may have the cognition, "Brahman exists," or "Brahman does not exist." Or, one may have the cognition, "I directly see Brahman," or "I do not see Brahman." The cognition that one has in all these cases is *vṛtti-jñāna*, which is different from Brahman which is *svarūpa-jñāna*. If so, just because one has the cognition that Brahman does not exist or that Brahman is not seen, it does not follow that there is no Brahman. In other words, the concealment of Brahman as indicated by these cognitions does not imply the loss or destruction of Brahman, for every such *vṛtti-jñāna* presupposes *svarūpa-jñāna*.

Though Brahman, the ultimate reality, is one and non-dual, *avidyā* projects the world of plurality. The

17. See *ŚSBV*, p. 280.

critics raise a volley of questions relating to the creation of the world of diversity. They ask : what did Brahman create the world for? Did it create the world for the benefit of others? How could Brahman have created it for the benefit of others when there were none to be benefited before the act of creation? How could it be said that creation is beneficial when it is baneful? How could Brahman whose desires are fulfilled (*āptakāma*) create it for its own sport? All these questions have to be ruled out as they are beside the point. Since the world-process is due to *avidyā*, it is illegitimate to relate it with Brahman.

What is existent (*bhāva-rūpa*) alone can be the cause of something. What is non-existent (*abhāva*) cannot be a cause. Since *avidyā* is the cause of the appearance of the pluralistic universe, it is said to be *bhāva-rūpa*. Here the expression "*bhāva-rūpa*" does not convey the sense that *avidyā* is real (*sat*); rather it conveys the sense that *avidyā* is something positive or existent to be distinguished from what is negative or non-existent. Though *avidyā* is not real, it is nevertheless existent accounting for the appearance of the world, until it is sublated by the immediate knowledge of the ultimate reality. Brahman which is *nirviśeṣa* is immutable. *Avidyā* which is falsely associated with Brahman, the pure consciousness, undergoes modification (*pariṇāma*) and appears as the world of plurality. So *avidyā* is the transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyupādāna-kāraṇa*) of the world. In so far as Brahman remaining immutable serves as the locus (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for *avidyā* which through modification appears as the pluralistic universe, the former is said to be the transfigurative material cause (*vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*) of the world. *Avidyā* which is both experienced and sublated is illusory (*mithyā*). Since *avidyā* is illusory, the world which originates therefrom through transformation cannot be but illusory. The nature of the material cause is found

in its effect. Just as the clayness of the lump is in the pot which is made out of it, even so the illusoriness of *avidyā*, the material cause, is seen in the world which is its effect.

## 4

It is necessary at this stage to refer to the question : "What is the locus (*āśraya*) as well as the object (*viṣaya*) of *avidyā*?" As in the case of knowledge which involves the knowing subject and the object known, *avidyā* also implies some person to whom it belongs, and some object to which it refers. The *jīva*, according to Maṇḍana, is the locus of *avidyā* which obscures the true nature of Brahman, and thus has Brahman as its object. It is no argument to say that the *jīva* cannot be the locus of *avidyā* on the ground that it is not different from Brahman. The *jīva* is not different from Brahman in the absolute sense when it remains in its natural state, freed from all impurities and bereft of adjuncts, which are caused by *avidyā*. It is different from Brahman only through *avidyā*. Intrinsically it is no other than Brahman.<sup>18</sup>

Critics point out that the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā* involves the fallacy of mutual dependence. The *jīva* is the result of *avidyā*, and *avidyā* has to depend upon the *jīva* which is the locus—thus there arises the fallacy of mutual dependence.

According to Maṇḍana, in two ways this objection could be met. One way of meeting this objection consists in showing that *avidyā* does not admit of logical analysis in terms of consistency and cogency. We cannot subject it to a critical examination as we would any other category. What is true of the world of things need not be true of *avidyā*. What we consider to be im-

18. *BS*, Part I, p. 10.



possible in the ordinary course of things—and perhaps what is contrary to the principle of causality—may be quite possible in *avidyā*. It is true that no object without coming into existence can be the cause of another. It is also true that the effect cannot be the cause of its own cause. Following these arguments which hold good in the space-time-cause-world, the critics raise the objection: “How can *avidyā* which is dependent on the *jīva* for its existence be itself the cause of the *jīva*?” The reply is that what holds good with regard to the objects of the phenomenal world becomes utterly meaningless when it is applied to *avidyā*; and thus there is no fallacy of mutual dependence. In *avidyā-māyā*, Maṇḍana remarks, there is nothing which is inconsistent, improbable, illegitimate. If it conveys what is consistent and congruous, it ceases to be *māyā*.<sup>19</sup> The second way of refuting the objection can be stated as follows: since both *avidyā* and the *jīva* are beginningless (*anādi*) like sprout-seed series, the alleged fallacy of mutual dependence is really ineffective and cannot vitiate the fundamental thesis of the Advaitin. We know that there is *avidyā*; and the question of its cause is meaningless. It is said that *avidyā* is beginningless and also purposeless (*anādiraprayojanā ca avidyā*). Since it is beginningless, there is no room for the fallacy of mutual dependence. Since it is purposeless, the question relating to the how and the why, and the when and the what for, of the phenomenal world are meaningless. There is neither logical nor chronological priority as between *avidyā* and *jīva*.<sup>20</sup>

This line of reasoning which Maṇḍana has adopted has been followed by Vācaspati in his *Bhāmātī* and Amal-

19. *Ibid.*: *na hi māyāyām kācidanupapattiḥ; anupapadyamānārthaiva hi māyā; upapadyamānārthatve yathārthabhāvānna māyā syāt.*”

20. See S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, “Maṇḍana and Sureśvara,” *Journal of the Madras University*, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1939, pp. 30-40.

ānanda in his *Vedānta-kalpataru*, which is a commentary on Vācaspati's *Bhāmatī*. Madhusūdanasarasvatī in his *Advaitasiddhi* defends this view.<sup>21</sup> He says that the criticism levelled against the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā* is untenable. If it be said that there is mutual dependence between the *jīva* and *avidyā*, we want to know whether it is in respect of their origin (*utpatti*), or knowledge (*jñapti*), or existence (*sthitī*). There is, argues Madhusūdanasarasvatī, no mutual dependence between *avidyā* and the *jīva* in respect of their origin; for both of them are beginningless. Nor can it be said that there is mutual dependence between them in respect of their knowledge. Though *avidyā* is manifested or made known by consciousness (*caitanya*) which is the Self, the *jīva-caitanya*, which is self-luminous, is known by itself, and so its knowledge does not require the knowledge of *avidyā*. If it be said that there is mutual dependence between *avidyā* and the *jīva* in respect of their existence, we want to know whether the critics suggest that both of them hang on each other (*parasparāśrita*) or that the existence of the one cannot be conceived apart from the existence of the other (*paraspara-sāpekṣa-sthitī*). Both the possibilities cannot be thought of in the present case. Though *avidyā* hangs on the *jīva-caitanya*, the *jīva-caitanya* does not rest on *avidyā*. Though the existence of *avidyā* cannot be thought of apart from the existence of *caitanya*, we cannot reverse this order and say that the existence of *jīva-caitanya* cannot be thought of apart from the existence of *avidyā*.

Maṇḍana is not favourably disposed towards the view that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*. Those who hold the view that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā* argue that just as darkness is in the house which it conceals, even so *avidyā* is in Brahman which it conceals. They cite the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text, "Brahman, indeed, was this

21. Nirnayasagar Press Edition, p. 585. Also see *Kṛṣṇālaṅkāra*, p. 77.

in the beginning. It knew itself only as 'I am Brahman'. Therefore it became all,"<sup>22</sup> in support of their view. Maṇḍana argues that since Brahman is eternal, self-luminous consciousness or knowledge, it cannot be the locus of *avidyā*. Further, the question of the removal of *avidyā* does not arise in the case of Brahman. Brahman is ever pure and eternally perfect, and so there is no question of its getting enlightenment through some source or agency different from it. There is no second to Brahman; consequently Brahman does not take in or part with anything whatsoever. There is another point to be urged against the view that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*. If Brahman were the locus of *avidyā*, even after attaining the nature of Brahman, *avidyā* cannot be removed; and this would rule out the possibility of overcoming bondage. It is said that, though Brahman was, indeed, all this in the beginning, owing to ignorance it thought that it was not Brahman and that it was not all, and so it thought that it was in bondage. When it got the liberating knowledge, it knew itself as one free from defects and differentiation. In short, according to this argument, it is Brahman which is in bondage, and it is Brahman which attains release. This argument, Maṇḍana says, is not satisfactory. If it be said that Brahman is in bondage due to the cognition of difference (*bheda-darśana*) caused by ignorance, and that it attains liberation by getting the knowledge of the non-dual nature of reality (*abheda-darśana*) which removes distinctions, the corollary is that when one individual soul attains release, there should be release for all. This is neither desirable nor

22. I, iv, 10. In the course of his commentary on this text, Śaṅkara answers the objection, "Is not ignorance out of place in Brahman?" as follows: "Not so, for knowledge regarding Brahman has been enjoined...Were there no superimposition of ignorance on Brahman, the knowledge of unity regarding Brahman would not be enjoined..."

possible. According to Maṇḍana, the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā* and that it is the *jīva* which is in bondage due to *avidyā*, is free from these difficulties.<sup>23</sup>

Though Maṇḍana has his own objections against the view that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*, those who hold this view justify it on the ground that there is no conflict between Brahman which is knowledge by nature (*svarūpa-jñāna*) and *avidyā*. This point requires explanation. According to Advaita, *avidyā* is the potency of Brahman. By inhering in Brahman as its potency, it is the cause of both erroneous cognition (*bhrama*) and valid cognition (*pramā*). Cognition of something as something else is error; and cognition of an object as it is is valid cognition. Both erroneous and valid cognitions are modes (*vṛtti*) of the mind. The internal organ, called the mind, undergoes modification at the time of the cognition of anything—whether the object is cognized as it is, or as something different. So by the mental mode (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*) is meant the modification of the internal organ. Mind being insentient, its modification, called *vṛtti*, must needs be insentient. Though the mental mode is insentient, it nevertheless appears to be sentient due to the reflection of knowledge (*caitanya* or *jñāna*) therein; consequently we speak of the mental mode as revealing objects such as pot, tree, and so on. The point to be noted here is that the mental mode is credited with the power of revealing things which are presented to it only by virtue of the light of Brahman-knowledge reflected in it; it illumines things through borrowed light. But the mental mode itself is revealed by knowledge. What is true of the mental mode is equally true of both the mind which has the mental mode and *avidyā* which is the transformative material cause of the mind. Mind, as well as *avidyā*, is revealed by knowledge. While everything—i.e.

*avidyā*, or the mind which is a product of *avidyā*, or the mental mode—is revealed by Brahman-knowledge, the latter is not revealed by anything else. If Brahman-knowledge too were to be revealed by something else, it will lead to the fallacy of infinite regress. So according to Advaita, Brahman-knowledge is self-luminous (*svapra-kāśa*) in the sense that while it reveals other things, it itself is not illumined by anything else. When a person makes the claim, "I know this," or "I do not know this," it is on the basis of Brahman-knowledge which is revelatory of both—the claim to have cognition and the claim to have ignorance (*avidyā*). So *avidyā* is illumined by Brahman-knowledge. Inasmuch as Brahman-knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*) and *avidyā* are related as the revealer and the revealed, it is wrong to think of any conflict between them.

Drawing a distinction between *svarūpa-jñāna*, i. e. Brahman-knowledge, and *ṛtti-jñāna*, i. e. modal cognition, Advaita maintains that it is modal cognition which is opposed to *avidyā*, and not Brahman-knowledge. Generally speaking, knowledge of an object removes ignorance of that object, and so knowledge and ignorance are said to be opposed to each other. Ignorance has an objective reference: it implies, that is to say, an object to which it refers. Knowledge can remove ignorance only when both of them have the same content (*viśaya*). A person, let us say, is ignorant of a certain object; his ignorance gets removed only by getting the knowledge of that object. The knowledge that he attains is the knowledge which has a content. It is called *ṛtti-jñāna*; and it is obtained through the mental mode. So the modal cognition which has a content removes ignorance, which also has the same content. For obtaining the knowledge of Brahman, the *ṛtti* that is required is no ordinary *ṛtti*. While in the case of the cognition of an object like a pot or a tree, the *ṛtti*, which corresponds to the object, has a form that is frag-

mented (*khaṇḍa*), in the case of the cognition of Brahman the *vr̥tti* has no fragmented form, because Brahman has no form at all. So the modal cognition through which Brahman is apprehended is termed *akhaṇḍākāra-vr̥tti-jñāna*. It alone removes ignorance which conceals the nature of Brahman. So it is *vr̥tti-jñāna* that removes *avidyā*, and not *svarūpa-jñāna* which is Brahman-knowledge.

Critics argue that the Advaitin cannot satisfactorily explain how *avidyā* is removed. It cannot be said that Brahman which is of the nature of knowledge will negate it. Since *avidyā* which is beginningless has co-existed with Brahman, which is knowledge, it cannot be negated by Brahman. If it be said that Brahman which is knowledge is opposed to *avidyā* as light is to darkness, and that it can therefore remove *avidyā*, then *avidyā* should never exist at all. Nor can it be said that some other knowledge yet to come will remove it. There is no second to Brahman, and the admission of some other knowledge will lead to dualism. Critics therefore argue that *avidyā* can never be removed. To quote Kumārila Bhaṭṭa: "If *avidyā* were natural, then it can never be destroyed. A natural existence (like that of *avidyā*) can be destroyed by some agency that is yet to come. But, for the non-dualist, a different agency or cause yet to come does not exist."<sup>24</sup> Holding the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*, Maṇḍana explains the removal of *avidyā* without prejudice to the thesis of non-dualism. The *jīva* is full of ignorance (*avidyā-maya*) which is negated by knowledge (*vidyā*). Maṇḍana explains the relation between *vidyā* and *avidyā* with a view to show how the former removes the latter.

*Avidyā* is destroyed by the knowledge which arises from the practice of *sādhana*s or aids like the study of scripture (*śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*), repeated

24. *Slokavārtika*, p. 663.

contemplation upon the truth (*dhyānābhyāsa*), etc., as enjoined by scripture. According to Maṇḍana, repeated contemplation upon the truth preceded by *śravaṇa* and *manana* annuls the cognition of diversity (*bheda-darśana*), as it is opposed to it. Maṇḍana admits that the knowledge that results from the study of *śruti*, rational reflection, and repeated contemplation is itself one which involves distinction. For example, *śravaṇa* implies the distinctions of the teacher, the taught, and the teaching. The knowledge which results from *śravaṇa*, followed by *manana* and *dhyānābhyāsa*, involves difference, and so it is a form of *avidyā*. For the sake of our understanding, this can be characterized as the good phase of *avidyā*, because it negates the cognition of difference (*bheda-darśana*) caused by *avidyā*. The latter can be called the bad phase of *avidyā*. Not only does the good phase of *avidyā* remove the cognition of diversity projected by the bad phase of *avidyā*, but also removes itself. Its work can be compared to that of the clearing-nut and poison. The clearing-nut purifies the turbid water of dirt by removing it, and also removes itself. A poison nullifies another poison, and also annihilates itself thereafter. In the same way, the good phase of *avidyā*, after removing the bad phase of *avidyā*, removes itself. When the illusory differences caused by *avidyā* are removed by the knowledge which arises from the practice of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *dhyānābhyāsa*, the *jīva* realizes that it is no other than Brahman. The *jīva* is different from Brahman only because of *avidyā*. When the latter which is the limiting principle is removed, the *jīva* shines forth in its natural resplendent state of Brahman, in the same manner as ether (*ākāśa*), enclosed in a pot and limited by it, becomes one with the all-pervading ether when the limiting adjunct, *viz* the pot, is destroyed. Maṇḍana quotes the authority of the *Īśāvāsya* text, "Knowledge and ignorance, he who knows the two together crosses death through ignorance and attains immortality through know-

ledge,"<sup>25</sup> in support of his explanation of the removal of *avidyā*, i.e. how the good phase of *avidyā* removes the bad phase of *avidyā*.

Maṇḍana explains the *Īśāvāsya* text mentioned above in two ways. In the first explanation, the first half of the text is interpreted as referring to the association of *avidyā* and *vidyā* as means (*upāya*) and end (*upeya*). In the absence of *avidyā*, *vidyā* does not arise; and the explanation for this is in the second half of the text. The word "*avidyā*" which occurs in the second half of the text stands for the understanding of the truth by means of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *dhyānābhyaśa*; and this is the good phase of *avidyā*. The word "*mṛtyu*" means *avidyā* which signifies the multifarious cognitions of difference; and this is the bad phase of *avidyā*. The word "*vidyā*" refers to the liberating knowledge which is no other than the all-revealing, self-luminous, eternal consciousness which is Brahman. What the second half of the text means is that when a person removes his *avidyā* or the cognition of difference (i.e. the *bheda-darśana* which is the bad phase of *avidyā*) by *avidyā* (i.e. the understanding of the truth by *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *dhyānābhyaśa*, which is the good phase of *avidyā*), his Self-realization takes place. According to Maṇḍana, *avidyā* is the means to *vidyā* in the sense that it removes the appearances of difference, which conceal the real nature of Brahman-Ātman. When the veil drops out, Brahman-Ātman remains what it has always been—self-luminous consciousness.

In his second explanation, the first half refers to the fact that *avidyā* never exists without *vidyā*, because appearances of *avidyā* are dependent upon the eternal, self-luminous consciousness which is Brahman. The illusory snake does not come out of nothing, nor does it pass into



nothing when the illusion is corrected. In the same manner, the appearances of difference do not spring from a void. Appearances belong to reality. The one reality appears as the world of plurality. Our cognition of the world of plurality is because of the light shed by the self-luminous, all-revealing consciousness. That is why the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says : "Everything shines only after that shining light. His light illumines all this world."<sup>26</sup> The second half is interpreted in the same manner as in the first explanation. So according to Maṇḍana, the *Īśāvāsyā* text conveys the following idea: *avidyā* and *vidyā* must be taken together as the former is the means to the latter, or as the former is dependent on the latter. The bad phase of *avidyā* is "*mṛtyu*". It is removed by the good phase of it consisting of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *dhyānābhyaśa*. The knower of truth remains what he has always really been—the eternal, free, self-luminous Brahman. No more effort than what is required for the removal of the appearances projected by *avidyā* is needed for Self-realization ; when the multifarious cognitions of difference disappear, the knower of truth, without any further effort, remains in his natural state of knowledge, in the same way as a crystal (*sphaṭikamaṇi*) shines forth in its true colour, when it is removed from the proximity of the *japā* flower.<sup>27</sup>

26. II, ii, 15.

27. *BS*, Part, I, pp. 12-13.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WAY AND THE GOAL

#### I

Release, according to Advaita, is the direct realization of the true nature of the Self (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*). If so, what is the way to attain it? According to Maṇḍana, the knowledge which arises from the Upaniṣads is indirect and mediate (*parokṣa*) and necessarily involves relation in some manner (*saṃsṛṣṭa-viṣaya*) like any other cognition arising from a valid verbal testimony. One attains liberation only when this indirect and mediate knowledge of the Self or Brahman becomes direct and immediate. Maṇḍana holds the view that repeated contemplation (*abhyāsa*) upon the content of the verbal cognition arising from the Upaniṣadic texts is necessary in order to get the direct intuition of the Self. Control of the mind (*śama*), control of the senses (*dama*), etc. are essential to transform the knowledge got from the Upaniṣads into immediate experience. Scripture-ordained *karma* is equally useful to attain Self-realization. If so, we should set forth clearly the role of *karma* which finds a place in the scheme of discipline leading to liberation by examining the relation between *karma* and knowledge ; and we should also explain the necessity of repeated contemplation, otherwise known as *prasaṅkhyāna*, and such other aids like control of the mind, control of the senses as well as their place in such a scheme.

Maṇḍana refers to seven theories with regard to the relation between *karma* and knowledge.<sup>1</sup> (1) According to one view, the injunctions contained in the ritualistic portion of the *Veda* enable us to realize the true nature of the Self. The Vedic injunctions (*vidhi*) and prohibitions (*niṣedha*) divert men from natural activities to the meditative activity leading to the realization of the Self. By performing the actions which are enjoined and abstaining from those which are prohibited, one becomes eligible for the realization of the Self. (2) According to another view, the performance of *karma* enjoined in the ritualistic portion of the *Veda* is intended for the sake of killing desires through a process of enjoyment and thereby to prepare the way for the knowledge of the Self. (3) There is again the view which maintains that the performance of *karma* is necessary to discharge the three congenital debts (*ṛṇatraya*) whose liquidation is an indispensable qualification for getting the knowledge of the Self. (4) There is also the view according to which karmas are not only conducive to their respective fruits, but also to the realization of the Self. (5) Karmas, according to another view, purify men and make them fit for getting the knowledge of the Self. (6) Yet another view seeks to show that the knowledge of the Self is a purificatory subsidiary to the agent, subserving the requirements of the various activities prescribed in the ritualistic portion of the *Veda*. (7) There is, finally, the view according to which *karma* and knowledge are fundamentally opposed to each other and have no relation whatever.

Maṇḍana accepts the fourth and fifth among these theories and discards all the others.<sup>2</sup> Refuting the last of the views mentioned above, which he discusses at very great length, he advocates his own view regarding the

1. *BS*, Part I, pp. 27-28.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

relation between *karma* and knowledge, and brings out the place and importance of meditation, control of the mind, etc. in the scheme of discipline leading to liberation.<sup>3</sup>

## 2

According to the first view, the injunctions of the ritualistic portion of the *Veda* are as much useful as the Upaniṣads for getting the knowledge of the Self or Brahman. There are those who are under the impression that the Self is the body and not something essentially different from it. This erroneous notion which identifies the Self with the body should first of all be removed in order to understand the real nature of the Self. The Vedic injunction enables us, according to this view, to dispel this wrong notion and to correctly understand the nature of the Self. There is, for instance, the injunction which says, "One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice." A person who performs the sacrifice in the way in which it has been indicated in scripture will attain heaven in the next life. His body which is insentient perishes here itself without continuing in the next life to enjoy the happiness of heaven. While the body perishes here itself, there is something which survives the body and enjoys the fruit, and that something is the sentient Self which is totally different from the physical body. So this injunction which enjoins the performance of a rite purports to show that the Self is not the body. By dispelling the wrong notion about the Self, it enables us to proceed along the right direction in our quest of the knowledge of the Self. Further, the advocates of this view try to bring out the usefulness of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions in the matter of getting the knowledge of the Self by pointing out that they

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

contribute to the control of the mind and the senses, which is absolutely necessary in order to realize the Self. One who is self-controlled, calm, withdrawn into himself, enduring, and concentrated is fit for Brahman-realization,<sup>4</sup> and not one who indulges in activities prompted by impulses, passions, and desires. The best and the easiest way to escape from these activities is to do these actions which are enjoined and to abstain from those which are prohibited by scripture. The Vedic injunctions and prohibitions are divertive in their character; they tend to turn men away from their natural activities either directly or indirectly. While the prohibitions (*niṣedha*) directly divert men from certain natural activities by forbidding them, the injunctions (*vidhi*) do the same work indirectly by prescribing certain actions, by doing which the pursuit of the natural activities comes to be avoided. The way in which a person is enabled to free himself from the pursuit of the outward activities which are prompted by passions and deep-rooted desires is of no consequence. What is essential is the avoidance of those natural activities which enslave the senses and captivate the mind. Since the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions enable us to have control over the senses and the mind, their usefulness in getting the knowledge of the Self is direct and perceptible. Considering the part which the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions play in the matter of getting the knowledge of the Self, it could be said that their import is in Self-realization. It is, therefore, maintained that the performance of karmas is necessary as it paves the way for Self-realization.<sup>5</sup>

Maṇḍana does not accept this view as it deliberately twists and tortures the real significance of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions by means of laboured and

4. See BU, IV, iv, 23.

5. BS, Part I, pp. 26-27.

far-fetched interpretation. The injunction "One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice" purports to show that heaven should be achieved through sacrifice. It does not intend to show that Self-knowledge is the fruit that will accrue to one who performs the sacrifice. When it is plainly stated that heaven is the end to which sacrifice is the means, it is meaningless to bring in Self-knowledge, which is not mentioned in the text, and say that the text points to Self-knowledge as the end to be achieved by means of sacrifice. If at least the Upaniṣads carry a reference to the injunctions about the ritual with a view to show that sacrifice is the means to the attainment of Self-knowledge, the two can be related as means and end. The Upaniṣads, however, do not carry any reference to the injunctions about the ritual as their work comes to an end when they point out that celibacy, control of the senses, etc. are the means to Self-realization. For every *karma* ordained by scripture there is a certain result. When we wish to get something for which scripture prescribes a particular means, it is but proper to say that what we wish to obtain is the fruit of the act which is prescribed as the means. Further, the end or the result which we wish to obtain is principal (*pradhāna*). There is no justification to ignore that which has become principal on account of its being desired (*kāmyamānatayā-pradhānam*)<sup>6</sup> and substitute for it something else which is out of the picture. When the text points out that one who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice, heaven is undoubtedly the end, and sacrifice is the means thereto. If so, the text purports to show that sacrifice is the means to heaven ; and its import is not in Self-knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

There is yet another reason for not accepting the contention that the import of the Vedic injunctions and

6. BS, Part II, p. 73.

7. BS, Part I, p. 28.

prohibitions is in Self-realization and not in what they prescribe and prohibit. The status of the individuals, the good results as well as the evil ones which they experience, the sort of life which they lead—all these are explained in terms of their prior deeds. A person who indulges in prohibited acts incurs sin and experiences misery ; but one who does what is enjoined by scripture gets good results like heaven and enjoys happiness. In this way we attribute the good results which accrue to a person to the prescribed karmas, and the evil ones to the prohibited deeds, which he has done. If it be said that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions have their purport in Self-realization, they do not have any validity in respect of what they prescribe and prohibit, and the corollary which can be drawn from this is that the performance of those deeds, prescribed or prohibited as the case may be, is not in any way responsible for the good or evil results which take place. Since we cannot account for them in any other way, we have to maintain, however absurd it may be, that they take place somehow without any cause. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the view that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions have their import in Self-realization.<sup>8</sup>

It may be argued that the scope of the Vedic injunctions like "One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice" is not restricted to revealing heaven, etc. as the fruits of karmas which are performed ; on the contrary, their scope extends as far as intimating Self-realization. An example may be given to elucidate this point. A person asks his servant to go to a certain place in order to get him some commodity which is available there. Since he does not know the route, the master instructs him about the route and the places, he should pass through in order to reach the destination. Though the master gives an account of the several places which

8. *Ibid.*

lie on the way, the information about them is not for their sake, but for the sake of something else. The intention of the master is to acquaint his servant first of all with the various places which lie on the way and through this with the place which he should finally reach. In short, the scope of his instruction is not restricted to giving information about the intermediary places, but extends as far as the final place. Similarly, the Vedic injunctions, it may be argued, give information about heaven, etc. as the results due to the deeds which are performed, and through this they intimate Self-realization.

This argument also is untenable as the comparison by which it is sought to be vindicated is unsound. In the example cited above, the purpose comes to be fulfilled only when the place, where the desired object is available, is reached and not by going to other places which are on the way. Since the aim of the master will remain unfulfilled so long as the destination is not reached, it is but proper to say that the scope of the instruction given by the master is not restricted to giving information about the intermediary places, but extends as far as the final place. But in the case of the Vedic injunctions, heaven, etc. are the fruits which are aimed at, and so the scope of the injunctions like "One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice" comes to an end as soon as they intimate the fruits like heaven and the means thereof. Maṇḍana draws our attention to the principle which should be adopted in the matter of ascertaining the import of the Vedic texts. The import (*tātparyam*) of the Vedic text should be brought out in accordance with the scope of the verbal statement (*śabda-vyāpāra*) and not otherwise. There is no other means which would enable us to find out its import.<sup>9</sup>

9. *Ibid.*, p. 29: "śabdavṛttānusāreṇa ccha tātparyam, pramāṇāntarābhāvāt." See also *BS*, Part II, p. 75.



When the scope of the verbal statement is restricted to revealing a certain means and the result thereof, we should say that the import of the text lies in that and not in something else which does not fall within its scope. It is, therefore, a tall and unsustainable claim to say that the Vedic injunctions have their import in Self-realization.

The contention that the injunction "One who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice" purports to intimate the Self as different from the body is equally fantastic. It is true that we should abandon the erroneous notion that the body is the Self. We cannot hope to get enlightenment about the nature of the Self from the Vedic injunction which prescribes a certain *karma* as the means to a particular result. From the *śruti* text like "It is neither short nor long..."<sup>10</sup> we come to know that the Self is different from the body, etc. There is no justification to squeeze out of the injunctive text the idea that the Self is different from the body by subjecting it to a tortuous and laborious interpretation, when the same idea is brought out in as direct and vivid a way as possible by the *Upaniṣad*.<sup>11</sup>

We shall now examine the contention that the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions enable one to control the mind and the senses and to develop calmness by arresting the pursuit of the natural activities prompted by passions and impulses and that, therefore, they are directly useful to the attainment of Self-realization. While it may be conceded that the prohibitions (*niṣedha*) directly prevent the pursuit of the natural activities which are motivated by the impulses, by forbidding them, it is not known, Maṇḍana says, how the injunctions (*vidhi*) which

10. *BU*, III, viii, 8.

11. *BS*, Part I, p. 30.

prescribe the performance of karmas like *agnihotra* could be said to divert men from the natural activities by eliminating or excluding them.

There are three kinds of injunctions: (1) original injunction (*apūrva-vidhi*), (2) restrictive injunction (*niyama-vidhi*), and (3) exclusive injunction (*parisaṅkhyā-vidhi*). A restrictive injunction is that which restricts something that is known only as a possible alternative. It is already known to us that we can remove the husk of the rice grains by threshing them or by splitting them with nails. When both the alternatives are open to us, husking by means of threshing is purely optional. There is, however, the injunction which says: "One should thresh the rice grains." Since this injunction specifically states that the husking shall be done by threshing only, it is known as restrictive injunction. The point that should be noted here is that because of this injunction the other alternative, *viz* splitting with nails, which is also known to us, comes to be totally eliminated.<sup>12</sup> When something may be taken to refer to both alternatives simultaneously, the injunction that precludes one of them is called an exclusive injunction. We can take the sentence "One should catch hold of the rein of the horse by saying..." as an instance of exclusive injunction. In the absence of this injunction, the sacred text expressing the seizing of the rein would apply to seizing the rein of the donkey as well as that of the horse. But since there is this injunction, one should seize the rein of the horse uttering the sacred text, and not that of the donkey. Thus, an exclusive injunction leads to the elimination of one of the two alternatives, to both of which something may be taken to refer simul-

12. Kṛṣṇa Yajvan, *Mimāṃsā-paribhāṣā*, translated and annotated by Swami Madhavananda, p. 20.

taneously.<sup>13</sup> An original injunction is that which tells something utterly unknown. For example, the sentence "One should sprinkle the rice grains" is an original injunction, in the absence of which sprinkling with regard to the rice grains would never be known.<sup>14</sup> The main difference between the original injunction, on the one hand, and the restrictive and exclusive injunctions on the other is that, while the former tells something utterly unknown (*atyantamaṇṇāptārtha*), the latter lead to the elimination of one of the alternatives which are already known (*prāptārtha*). The injunctions which prescribe *agnihotra* and other karmas are not restrictive or exclusive injunctions; on the contrary, they are original injunctions, for they enjoin something which was utterly unknown. If so, they cannot lead to the elimination of the natural activities which are prompted by passions and desire.<sup>15</sup>

If at least there can be any conflict or opposition between the karmas which are prescribed by the Vedic injunctions and the natural activities, one can suggest that the performance of the Vedic karmas will be prejudicial to the pursuit of the natural activities, and that, therefore, they will cause them to disappear. Both of them—the Vedic karmas and the natural activities—are conducive to happiness; nevertheless, there is a notable difference between the two. While the pursuit of the natural activities contributes to happiness here and now, the same cannot be said of the Vedic karmas. In other words, the result of one set of activities is perceptible (*dr̥ṣṭārtha*), whereas the result of the other set of activities is imperceptible (*adr̥ṣṭārtha*). There can be no conflict between the Vedic karmas and the natural activities,

13. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

15. *BS*, Part, I, p. 29.

since they yield their respective results at different times. Not only are they not conflicting, but they may be said to be, to use the expression of Leibnitz, quite "compossible", though they contribute to the same result, *viz* happiness. A person serves his master ardently as well as faithfully, and also performs a sacrifice known as the *sāṅgrahaṇī* with a view to get a village. The sacrifice which he performs does not stand in the way of his service to the master. The two activities — service and sacrifice — are not conflicting, but are compossible. There is no disjunction between service and the *sāṅgrahaṇī*. One may perform them both on the same day or on different days. So the *sāṅgrahaṇī* does not exclude service. Though they are means to the same result, the contribution of the one is perceptible whereas that of the other is not so. In the same way, the Vedic karmas and the natural activities may be thought of as compossible and not conflicting, even though they contribute to the same result. In so far as both of them are conducive to happiness by fulfilling desires, they are on the same footing. Just as the natural activities in which a person indulges are in fulfilment of certain desires which clamour for satisfaction, the Vedic karmas also which a person performs are in fulfilment of certain desires like heaven, etc. So far as the state of mind is concerned, there is no difference at all in both the cases, for it is overwhelmed with the desires which are dominant, whether they are for the attainment of certain things here or hereafter. When the mind falls a prey to the captivating desires and remains in a state of agitation and disturbance, how can it be said that the performance of karmas, which are indicated as the means to the fulfilment of desires, is directly useful for Self-realization by contributing to the control of the senses and the calmness of mind ?<sup>16</sup>

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

According to the second of the views mentioned earlier, *karma* is treated as a subsidiary to the knowledge of the Self on the ground that it enables us to acquire the latter by killing our desires through enjoyment. Desires are the formidable obstacles to our getting the knowledge of the Self. It is only when they are extirpated, root and branch, that a person is able to get the vision of the Self. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, for example, says: "When all the desires that dwell within the human heart are cast away, then a mortal becomes immortal and (even) here he attains Brahman."<sup>17</sup> The way to achieve this lies through *karman*s. The reason for this is obvious. Desires are killed only through a process of enjoyment and cloying. They cease to exist when the objects which are desired are realized. Since the performance of *karman*s leads to the appropriate fruits which are aimed at and thereby to the fulfilment of desires, the advocates of this view maintain that *karman*s whose performance is necessary to get the knowledge of the Self are subsidiary to it.

This view is also untenable. It proceeds, according to Maṇḍana, on the wrong assumption that the enjoyment of the desired object leads to the fulfilment of desire and thereby to its extinction. Every effort that we make to realize objects for the purpose of satisfying our desires serves to augment rather than to abate them. When enjoyment becomes a habit, it is always sought after relentlessly, and there can be no end to this. That is why Manu declares that desires can never be extinguished by enjoyment.<sup>18</sup> The author of the *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya* also points out that "desires grow keeping pace

17. II, iii, 14.

18. II, 94.

with their enjoyment.<sup>19</sup> Far from helping us to attain the knowledge of the Self, karmas, which the injunctions prescribe as the means to the realization of objects which are desired, become a positive hindrance to us. If a person is ignorant of the means conducive to the fulfilment of his desires, he may at least seek the knowledge of the Self. When he comes to know of the various means and the results thereof through the Vedic injunctions, he will naturally pursue them caring little for the knowledge of the Self; he may even abhor that knowledge which is destructive of human enjoyment. Therefore, enjoyment of the objects which are desired is no remedy at all to remove the desires. What is required is an insight into the worthlessness of what is desired. If we realize and repeatedly contemplate upon the truth that the objects desired by us are ephemeral, and that they do not give us abiding satisfaction, we are sure to root out our desires and strive for the realization of the Self. Maṇḍana urges another reason also to show the absurdity of this view. If a person who is desirous of Self-realization were to remove all his desires only through a process of enjoyment and satiety, it would become obligatory for him to perform all the karmas as the indispensable preliminary to the attainment of the knowledge of the Self. This is on the face of it an impossible task.<sup>20</sup>

In the two views which we examined and rejected above, *karma* and knowledge were treated as the subsidiary and the principal respectively with a view to show that *karma* is the direct means to Self-knowledge. There are those who reverse this relation and argue that the knowledge of the Self stands in a subordinate relation to *karma*. They argue that only a person who knows that

19. II, 15.

20. BS, Part I, p. 30.

his Self is different from the body, and that it outlives the body to enjoy the fruits of *karma* like heaven, which manifest themselves after death of this body, will perform the Vedic karmas. By getting this knowledge, the agent becomes qualified for actions. The qualification which the agent thus acquires is analogous to that which the rice-grains acquire by being sprinkled with water. Just as the rice-grains become fit to be used in sacrifice due to the purification (*saṃskāra*) which sprinkling causes in them, so also the agent becomes qualified for actions through the knowledge which he acquires. In short, the knowledge of the Self, according to this view, stands in a subordinate relation to *karma* by becoming a purificatory subsidiary to the agent.<sup>21</sup>

Maṇḍana brings out the untenability of this view by pointing out that there is no evidence<sup>22</sup> like context (*prakaraṇa*), etc. to show the subsidiary relation of knowledge to *karma*. In the case of sprinkling the rice-grains, its relation to *karma* is known through context (*prakaraṇa*). No purpose is going to be served by sprinkling rice-grains which are not used in *karma*. But when rice-grains which are used in *karma* are sprinkled, there arises an unseen potency which is related to the supreme unseen potency of the *karma* under reference. So we are able to know through the context that the sprinkling of rice-grains is related to the sacrifice under reference. But no such evidence is available to show the subsidiariness of knowledge to *karma*. The section which deals with the knowledge of the Self falls outside the ritualistic portion of the *Veda*, and so it is impossible to establish the subsidiariness of knowledge to *karma* through context.

21. *BS*, Part I, p. 30.

22. The evidences indicative of the subsidiary relation are six. They are: (1) *śruti* (direct assertion), (2) *liṅga* (indication), (3) *vākya* (syntactical relation), (4) *prakaraṇa* (context), (5) *sthāna* (position), and (6) *saṃākhyā* (designation).

Nor is it possible to establish the relation through syntactical connection (*vākya*). There is, for example, the passage, "He whose sacrificial laddle is made of *parṇā* wood..."<sup>23</sup> The laddle (*juhū*) which is referred to in this passage is a special implement which is used in ritual only. Through syntactical connection implied in the passage "He whose sacrificial laddle is made of *parṇā* wood", it is known that "being-made-of-*parṇā*-wood" is subsidiary to the laddle. Since the laddle is invariably related to the rite, "being-made-of-*parṇā*-wood" also comes to be related to the rite. Thus it is established that "being-made-of-*parṇā*-wood" is subsidiary to the rite through the sacrificial laddle. But no such relation between knowledge and *karma* can be shown through syntactical connection. The self which is the agent cannot be used as a mediating link to establish the relation between knowledge and *karma*. Unlike the laddle which being indispensable for the rite is invariably related to it, the agent is not invariably related to scripture-ordained *karmas* alone; the agent performs the secular acts in the same way as he does the Vedic *karmas*. Thus it is clear that we cannot establish the subsidiariness of knowledge to *karma* through syntactical connection.<sup>24</sup>

Since there is no evidence like context (*prakaraṇa*), syntactical connection (*vākya*), etc. to show that knowledge is subsidiary to *karma*, it must be admitted, argues Maṇḍana, that the knowledge of the Self has an independent fruit of its own, and that statements like "He does not return hither again", which declare the fruit that will accrue to one who has attained Self-knowledge, should not be brushed aside as *arthavāda*. The contention that the pursuit of the Vedic *karmas* is the perceptible result (*dr̥ṣṭa-phala*) of the knowledge of the Self is

23. *Taittiriya-saṃhitā*, III, v, 7, 1 : "yasya *parṇamayī juhūrbhāvati*."

24. *BS*, Part I, p. 31.



absurd. It is true that a person will not perform the Vedic karmas, whose fruits manifest themselves only after death, if he does not know that the Self is the agent, and that being eternal it outlives the body to enjoy the fruits. But the knowledge of the Self which we get from the Upaniṣads is not conducive to the pursuit of the Vedic karmas; on the contrary, it is positively prejudicial to it. The Upaniṣads declare that the Self is neither the agent nor the enjoyer. The *Brhadāranyaka* says, "The Self eats nothing."<sup>25</sup> In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* we come across the passage, "The other looks on without eating."<sup>26</sup> We are told in the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* that the Self is "without parts, without activity."<sup>27</sup> While the first of these passages purports to show that the Self is not the experiencer, the last one denies the agency of the Self. The knowledge of the Self which we get from the Upaniṣads is of no use at all for *karma*. And so it is not possible to prove the subsidiariness of Self-knowledge to *karma* on the score that the knowledge of the Self is necessary for one to perform the Vedic karmas whose fruits manifest only after death. It is utterly meaningless to cite the Upaniṣadic texts like "What, indeed, one performs with knowledge, faith and meditation, that indeed becomes more powerful",<sup>28</sup> "He, O Gārgi, who in this world, without knowing this Immutable, offers oblations in the fire finds all such acts but perishable,"<sup>29</sup> "Both his knowledge and work take hold of him,"<sup>30</sup> etc. on the assumption that they lend support to the subsidiariness of knowledge to *karma*. The first of these passages does not refer to the knowledge of the Self

25. III, viii. 8.

26. III, i, 1.

27. VI, 19.

28. CU, I, i, 10.

29. BU, III, viii, 10.

30. BU, IV, iv, 2.

or Brahman (*brahma-vidyā*) but to the knowledge of the *udgītha* (*udgītha-vidyā*). This will be evident from the opening passage of the section: "One should meditate on *Om*, the *udgītha*."<sup>31</sup> The second passage does not reveal that the knowledge of the Self is subsidiary to *karma*; on the other hand, it praises the knowledge of the Immutable through decrying karmas which yield only perishable results. The last one does not show that knowledge and work begin together to manifest their results, but it shows the division (*vibhāga*) of knowledge and *karma*. It only means that knowledge takes hold of one man and *karma* another, since there is no combination of the two.<sup>32</sup>

## 4

Some others explain the relation between *karma* and knowledge differently. They maintain that one becomes eligible for Self-knowledge only by discharging the three congenital debts (*ṛṇa-traya*) for which the performance of karmas is indispensable. They cite the authority of Manu in support of their contention. Manu says: "Having discharged the three obligations, one is to set one's mind on release."<sup>33</sup> The debt that one owes to the sages should be paid off by the study of the *Veda* and the observance of celibacy (*brahmacarya*), the debt to the gods by sacrifices like *agnihotra*, and the debt to the ancestors by means of progeny. So the performance of *karma* is necessary to discharge the three congenital debts, whose liquidation is an indispensable qualification for attaining the knowledge of the Self.<sup>34</sup>

This view is not acceptable to Maṇḍana. If every one should discharge the three congenital debts in order

31. *CU*, I, i, 1.

32. *BS*, Part I, pp. 31-32.

33. *Manu*, VI, 35.

34. *BS*, Part I, p. 27.

to acquire the necessary qualification for getting the knowledge of the Self, scripture should have enjoined only one order of life, *viz* that of the householder. On the contrary, it refers to the different orders of life and one is permitted to adopt that order of life which one desires. The *Ābāla Upaniṣad*, for example, says: "Otherwise (if a suitable occasion arises) let one renounce from the life of studentship."<sup>35</sup> It is clear from this that it is necessary for every one to be a householder; and if one is not a householder, one cannot liquidate the debts one owes to the gods and the ancestors. The ancient sages, it is said, did not desire children thinking, "What shall we achieve through children?" In this manner the ancient sages abandoned the desire for offspring, *karma*, etc. A householder who aims at Self-knowledge without performing the duties that belong to his station cannot attain it, because the sin that results on account of his not doing what is enjoined by scripture becomes a hindrance to the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>36</sup> This is the real significance of Manu's declaration: "Having discharged the three obligations, one is to set one's mind on release."

## 5

There are those who argue that there is no relation whatsoever between *karma* and knowledge as the two are fundamentally opposed to each other. *Karma* involves duality in the form of means and end, doer and deed, while knowledge reveals the Self which is one and non-dual. So it is impossible, according to them, to think of any relation between *karma* and knowledge. If it can be shown that *karma* is a means to knowledge, or that knowledge requires the assistance of *karma* in the discharge of

35. 4.

36. *BS*, Part I, p. 36.

its work, it is but proper to say that there is relation between them. The protagonists of this view vehemently repudiate the various possibilities that could be thought of to show the usefulness of *karma* to knowledge. Any attempt undertaken for this purpose is bound to be, according to them, a futile adventure. Let us first state their argument in detail.

There is absolutely no need of *karma* in the matter of Brahman-Ātman. The latter is not something to be accomplished or brought into being through *karma*, for it is ever-existent. *Karma* can never be a means to what is eternal. Nor is it required for the origination of the knowledge of the Self. Knowledge is always obtained through a *pramāṇa*; and since *karma* is not a source of knowledge, there is no need of it for the purpose of getting the knowledge of the Self.

Even though it does not originate knowledge, can it not serve, it may be asked, as an auxiliary to knowledge by helping it in its work? If there is anything to be produced by knowledge, such a question will be significant. There is, however, nothing to be done by knowledge which, by its very nature and unaided, reveals the object. Neither release (*mokṣa*), nor the removal of *avidyā* (*avidyā-nivṛtti*), nor the destruction of *karma* (*karma-kṣaya*) can be said to be accomplished or produced by knowledge. Release is not something to be brought into being through knowledge. Since release consists in realizing the nature of the Self which is eternal, the question of cause-effect relation between knowledge and release does not arise. If release were something to be brought into being through knowledge, it would cease to be eternal. Removal of *avidyā* also is not something to be done by knowledge after it has come into existence, in whatever way *avidyā* is considered. *Avidyā* may be understood in two ways—as non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) and as mis-apprehension

(*viparyaya-grahana*). Non-apprehension is the *prāgabhāva* of apprehension or knowledge; and so at the rise of knowledge, it ceases to be. Since the rise of knowledge marks the disappearance of non-apprehension, the question of its removal by knowledge after coming into existence does not arise. The same thing holds good with regard to mis-apprehension, though it is positive (*bhāva-rūpa*). A person mistakes nacre for silver. But when he knows the truth subsequently, his erroneous knowledge disappears. It is wrong to think that it persists for a little while even after the rise of knowledge, and that it is removed by knowledge only subsequently. Mis-apprehension or erroneous knowledge disappears as soon as the right knowledge which is opposed to it comes into being. Since the rise of the right knowledge itself is the removal of mis-apprehension, it is wrong to say that knowledge brings about the destruction of mis-apprehension, by placing them in the cause-effect relation. Just as the removal of *avidyā* (*avidyā-nivṛtti*) is not the effect produced by knowledge, so also the destruction of *karma* which binds the individual is not the effect produced by knowledge. Karmas are the product of *avidyā*. They persist so long as *avidyā* continues. When *avidyā*, which is their root cause, disappears at the rise of knowledge, they too follow suit. Only if they could continue even after the disappearance of *avidyā*, the question of their destruction by knowledge with the assistance of obligatory and occasional rites (*nitya-naimittika-karma*) will arise. Scripture itself refers to the destruction of karmas when their root cause, viz *avidyā*, disappears at the rise of knowledge. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, for instance, says: "The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled, and his karmas terminate when He is seen—the higher and the lower."<sup>87</sup>

It is not to the purpose to allege, argue the advocates of this view, that Brahman which is non-dual, which is

bereft of relation, cannot be made known by the verbal cognition (*śabda-jñāna*) which has a relational content (*saṁsr̥ṣṭa-viśaya*), and that to get the direct intuition (*pratyakṣa* or *aparokṣa-jñāna*), by which alone Brahman is to be realized, *karma*, meditation, etc. are required. When we are able to get the knowledge of the non-dual, non-relational Brahman from the Upaniṣadic texts like "The Self is not this, not this,"<sup>38</sup> "One only without a second,"<sup>39</sup> where is the need for the alleged intuitive cognition? Cognition is required for the purpose of knowing something. Since the non-dual Brahman is made known by the verbal testimony itself, there is certainly no need for the other cognition. What is known once through some *pramāṇa* does not require to be known again through some other source. What the other *pramāṇa* is expected to do has already been done by the verbal testimony (*śabda-pramāṇa*). The Upaniṣadic texts not merely intimate the Self or Brahman as the existent something, but they intimate it as the highest good, for they proclaim in unmistakable terms that the Self is the supreme bliss, and that it is free from evil, old age, death, and grief. Thus, since we get the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman from *śabda* itself,—a knowledge which is clear, definite, and free from doubt,—nothing more is required. When the realization of Brahman or the Self does arise through the knowledge conveyed by *śabda*, there is no transmigratoriness (*saṁsāritvam*) as before; the body and the senses are no more the limiting factors; there is no further deception by the appearance of the phenomenal world. The reason for this is obvious. Due to ignorance of the real nature of the Self, a person develops the wrong notion (*abhimāna*) that his body is the Self; and the attributes of transmigratoriness come to be superimposed upon the Self. When the real nature of the Self is realized through

38. BU, III, ix, 26.

CU, VI, ii, 1.

the knowledge conveyed by *śabda*, the false knowledge of the Self disappears, and the attributes of transmigratoriness could no more be associated with the Self. Scripture says : "He, verily, who knows the supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman himself;"<sup>40</sup> and so a person who realizes the Self or Brahman which is free from evil, old age, death, etc. gets himself lifted from the destructive whirlpool of *saṃsāra*. So long as a person identifies his Self with the body, he is subject to the misery caused by the limiting adjunct, *viz* body. In the absence of the knowledge that his Self is the ultimate reality and that it is non-dual, he thinks that there are objects other than the Self, which he should strive for and that there are persons for whom he should suffer in the body. He struggles desiring something for himself, something else for his son, etc. and gets involved in the cycle of birth and death. But all this is impossible for the man who sees everything as the Self. Scripture testifies to this when it says, "If a man knows the Self as 'I am this', then desiring what and for whose sake will he suffer in the body?"<sup>41</sup> Since embodiment or the association with body is the result of false knowledge, it gets removed when false knowledge disappears at the rise of right knowledge; and so a person who has realized the Self is non-embodied or bodiless even while alive. That is why the *Upaniṣad* says: "Him, verily, who is non-embodied, pleasure and pain do not touch."<sup>42</sup> In short, there is no transmigratoriness as before in the case of one who has realized Brahman as the Self; however, one who has transmigratoriness as before has not realized Brahman as the Self. Hence the advocates of this view maintain that, since the realization of the Self takes place through the knowledge conveyed by the

40. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III, ii, 9.

41. *BU*, IV, iv, 12.

42. *CU*, VIII, xii, 1.

Upaniṣadic texts, the utility of *karma*, meditation, etc. is ruled out.<sup>43</sup>

To sum up: there are two points which clearly emerge from the view stated above. They are: (1) *karma* and knowledge are diametrically opposed to each other, and so there can be no relation between them; and (2) the Upaniṣadic texts which reveal the nature of the non-dual Self directly lead to the realization of the Self, which is release, with the result that there is no need for *karma* and meditation for bringing about the final manifestation of the real nature of the Self.

Maṇḍana wholly sets his face against the view mentioned above. According to him, *karma* and knowledge should be said to be related as means (*upāya*) and end (*upēya*). He would suggest that the relation between them should be understood in the light of the relation among the means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), the object of knowledge (*prameya*), etc. on the one hand, and the resulting knowledge on the other. For the origination of knowledge, *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, etc. are indispensable. Since in their absence knowledge cannot arise, they are rightly regarded as the means to knowledge. This holds good even in the case of knowledge of the non-dual reality. It also presupposes distinctions in the form of *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, etc., all of which are means to it. No one denies the relation of means and end between them, even though *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, etc. involve duality, and the resulting knowledge has non-relational, non-dual content. If the relation between them is denied on the ground that they are fundamentally opposed to each other, knowledge of the non-dual reality can never arise at all. It may be suggested that the two are not opposed to each other as they do not exist at the same time.



There is temporal difference between means and end : the former precedes the latter in point of time. Though *pramāṇa*, *prameya* etc. serve as the means to bring about the knowledge of the non-dual reality, they disappear as soon as the latter comes into being. Thus, since they exist at different times, they are not opposed to each other ; at the same time they are related as means and end. The same explanation, observes Maṇḍana, holds good between *karma* and knowledge. *Karma* no doubt involves duality, and the knowledge that results is the knowledge of the non-dual reality. Nevertheless, the two are not opposed to each other, as they do not exist at the same time. When the knowledge of the non-dual reality takes place, distinctions of all kinds disappear. But *karma* which involves duality could exist before the origination of such knowledge. Hence *karma* and knowledge, says Maṇḍana, could be related as means and end, in spite of the fact that the former involves duality, while the latter has for its content the non-dual reality.<sup>44</sup>

How does *karma* serve as a means (*upāya*) to the realization of the Self? Maṇḍana maintains that both *karma* and meditation play a vital role in bringing about Self-realization. It should not be argued as a matter of general principle that the illusory cognition (*mithyāabhāsa*) will disappear, wherever it may arise, as soon as the truth is known. It may be that in a few cases it disappears at the onset of right knowledge ; but it may also continue due to some reason in certain cases even after the rise of right knowledge. We can take the well-known case of the illusion of direction which Maṇḍana cites in support of his point of view. Most of us experience the illusion of direction when we go to a new place. In spite of the fact that the truth about the direction has been made known to us by a trustworthy person in as clear a way as

44. BS, Part I, p. 32. Also see BS, Part II, p. 87.

possible, the illusion very often persists. The reason for this is that the impression of the illusion, of which we were the victims, is fairly settled or deep-rooted in the mental habitat. In the same way, the illusion (*mithyāva-bhāsa*) of the world continues even in the case of a person who has the knowledge of the non-dual Self conveyed by the Upaniṣadic texts. If the illusion of the world continues in spite of the fact that the verbal cognition (*śābda-jñāna*) arising from the *Upaniṣad* is clear, certain, and indubitable, it is because of the beginningless *avidyā*. We do not know when this illusion due to *avidyā* started, and we have been acting all the time under the magical spell of this illusion. And so the impressions of the beginningless illusion which have grown, developed, and strengthened themselves serve as the specific reason (*hetuviśeṣa*) for the continuance of the illusion of the world, even after the rise of the right knowledge of the non-dual Self through the Upaniṣadic texts. In order to counter these impressions, something more than the verbal cognition arising from the *Upaniṣad* is required. Maṇḍana says that repeated contemplation (*abhyāsa*) on the content of the verbal cognition generated by the Upaniṣadic texts is necessary in order to root out the impressions of the beginningless illusion. As a result of the repeated contemplation, the impressions of the knowledge of the non-dual reality obtained from the *Upaniṣad* grow and develop, become powerful and get stabilized in such a way that they are able to remove the impressions of the beginningless illusion and thereby bring about the manifestation of the real nature of the Self (*ātma-svarūpāvirbhāva*). *Karma* also, argues Maṇḍana, is useful in this regard as it is prescribed by scripture. Whereas the usefulness of contemplation is quite visible, that of *karma* is imperceptible. That *karma* also is useful to Self-realization is clearly brought out in a passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: "Him the Brāhmaṇas seek to know by the study of the *Veda*, by

sacrifices (*yajñena*)..."<sup>45</sup> Some others, observes Maṇḍana, explain the usefulness of *karma* in a different way. Since the observance of obligatory rites brings about the destruction of sin, *karmas*, according to them, are useful to Self-realization through destroying the impurities of sins (*kaluṣa-nibarhaṇadvāreṇa*) that hinder the attainment of the goal.<sup>46</sup>

It may be argued that it is impossible to think of any activity, good or bad, deliberately undertaken by a person who has the indubitable knowledge of the non-dual Self. The pursuit of the various activities of a binding character is due to the conceit (*abhimāna*) that the Self is the agent and enjoyer. But this conceit stands contradicted by the knowledge that the Self is neither the agent nor the enjoyer. The knowledge that a person has attained conditions or determines his behaviour. When a person has known the eastern direction through the help of the rising sun, he will not go in the direction of the west saying that it is the east. In the same way, a person who knows that the Self is not the agent and the enjoyer will, according to this argument, scarcely do anything like an agent and enjoyer. The illusory appearances may continue; but he is only a *witness* of them and not a victim to them. This argument, says Maṇḍana, is without any force as it fails to take note of the strength of the knowledge that has arisen through *śabda vis-a-vis* the strength of the deep rooted impressions of the beginningless illusion. Though there is the right knowledge, its impressions (*samskāra*) are not developed, whereas the impressions of the illusion are strong and powerful. The indubitable knowledge which has arisen has not begun its work, whereas the work of the impressions of the illusion is in full swing. Under the bewitching influence of the powerful

45. IV, iv, 22.

46. BS, Part I, p. 35.

impressions of the illusion, even the right knowledge may appear differently. It will not be able to bring about any change, and the person will act as before.<sup>47</sup>

Maṇḍana drives home the point by two illustrations. The spectators who witness a drama know definitely that the kings and the queens who appear on the stage are not real kings and queens subject to afflictions; nevertheless, the stage-kings and the stage-queens are the cause of sorrow and fear, which the spectators undergo, when they are witnessing the performance. Again, though it is known for certain that sugar is sweet, there is the continued experience of bitter taste for him whose mouth is affected by bile. He tastes sugar; the bitter taste which is only illusory makes him miserable as if it is real, and he spits it out. Similarly, even for one who has known through the verbal cognition (*śābda-jñāna*) arising from the Upaniṣadic texts that the Self, being the ultimate reality, is non-different from Brahman and that it is neither the agent nor the enjoyer, the illusion of the world continues; and he finds himself engaged in activities which are the source of pleasure and cause of misery. Therefore the verbal cognition which arises from the *Upaniṣad* should be supplemented by certain aids (*sādhana*) like contemplation in order to remove the impressions of the beginningless illusion. That is why, observes Maṇḍana, the *Upaniṣad* says, "The Self should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon."<sup>48</sup> This text is significant in that it points out that after getting the knowledge of the Self by hearing the Upaniṣadic texts, one should critically reflect on the content of the cognition obtained from them, and then meditate upon it. The direct realization of the non-dual Self is possible only when these means are combined with the verbal cognition arising from the Upani-

47. *Ibid.*

48. *BU*, II, iv, 5.

ṣadic texts. Other means like control of the mind, control of the senses, rituals, etc. which are prescribed by scripture are also necessary to get the realization of the Self. Otherwise, asks Maṇḍana, what are they advised for?<sup>49</sup>

Maṇḍana rejects the contention that control of the mind, control of the senses, and other means are prescribed for the purpose of getting the knowledge of the Self from scripture. All that is required for the purpose of getting the verbal cognition from the Upaniṣadic texts is the knowledge of the relation between the word and its meaning (*śabdārtha-sambandhajñāna*), and not the special means (*sādhana-viśeṣa*) like control of the mind, control of the senses, etc. Since the relation between a word and its meaning is eternal, the Upaniṣadic *śabda* conveys its sense independently of these means. Nor can it be said that the verbal cognition, which arises from the *Upaniṣad*, lacks certainty and is not indubitable in the absence of these means. If that were the case, how can one adopt the very means like control of the mind, control of the senses, etc. which we come to know only through scripture? If there is no certainty with regard to what is made known by scripture, no one will resort to these means known only through *śruti*. Hence all these special means (*sādhana-viśeṣa*) which are indicated by scripture should be adopted after getting the verbal cognition (*śabda-jñāna*) from the *Upaniṣad* for attaining Self-realization.<sup>50</sup>

## 6

Maṇḍana is favourably disposed to two other views about the relation between *karma* and knowledge as they are in accordance with his standpoint. One of them

49. *BS*, Part I, p. 35.

50. *Ibid.*

explains the relation between *karma* and knowledge in terms of the principle of *two-in-oneness* (*saṁyoga-prṥhaktva*). According to this view, all the *karman* prescribed in the ritualistic portion (*karma-kāṇḍa*) of the *Veda* are bi-functional in their character. Since they are enjoined with reference to their respective results like heaven, they are conducive to them; they are also at the same time useful to Self-realization, as there is the scriptural declaration, "Him the Brāhmaṇas seek to know by the study of the *Veda*, by sacrifices (*yajñena*)..."<sup>51</sup> which brings out the subsidiariness of *karma* to knowledge. That *karman* subserve two ends—their respective fruits like heaven and also Self-knowledge—should be explained according to the principle of *saṁyoga-prṥhaktva*. It is said: "When one serves two ends, the relation is *saṁyoga-prṥhaktva*."<sup>52</sup> For example there is the text: "He is to tie the beast to the ebony stake;" and there is also the text: "He who desires virility is to make the stake of ebony."<sup>53</sup> The ebony wood (*khādira*) as stated in these texts serves two ends—it serves the purpose of sacrifice in the capacity of sacrificial stake, and it also serves to bring about virility to the sacrificer. In the same way *karman* are said to be bi-functional in their character, as they have two distinct functions by conducing to their respective fruits and also to the realization of the Self. Maṇḍana says that *karma* is subsidiary to knowledge in the sense that it is useful as stated earlier to attain Self-realization; it plays its part like repeated contemplation and other means in bringing about the final manifestation of the Self (*ātma-svarūpābhivyakti*). It is not subsidiary to knowledge in the sense in which the *pra-*

51. BU, IV, iv, 22.

52. *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IV, iii, 5: "ekasya tūbhayaive saṁyoga-prṥhaktvam." See BS, Part II, p. 71.

53. See BS, Part II, p. 71: "yūpe paśum badhnāti." "khādiram vīryakāmasya."

*yāja*, which helps the *darśapūrṇamāsa* rites in the production of the final result, is said to be subsidiary to them.<sup>54</sup>

## 7

According to another view, which is also acceptable to Maṇḍana, karmas are intended to purify the person and make him fit for Self-realization. There is the traditional code which says: "One creates the capacity to attain Brahman through mahāyajñās (*brahma-yajña*, *deva-yajña*, *pitr-yajña*, etc.) and through sacrifices,"<sup>55</sup> and "He for whom there have been these forty and eight purificatory ceremonies."<sup>56</sup> In support of both the views mentioned above, Maṇḍana quotes the *Vedānta-sūtra*: "Since it is enjoined (by scripture), the karmas belonging to the *āśrama* also (should be performed)."<sup>57</sup> It is evident from this *sūtra* that control of the mind, control of the senses, etc. are not the only means which are required for attaining Self-realization, but the karmas belonging to the *āśrama* also are required as they are enjoined by scripture.<sup>58</sup>

It may be argued that scripture-ordained rites are not at all required for Self-realization, since the latter can be attained exclusively through the tranquillizing, contemplative discipline. Maṇḍana is prepared to admit that it is possible for one who observes life-long celibacy (*ūrdhvaretas*) to attain Self-realization exclusively through contemplation in association with the control of the mind (*śama*), control of the senses (*dama*), etc. without performing *yajña* and such other scriptural rites. But he is not prepared on that account to ignore or minimize the importance of scriptural rites which are, from his point of view, exceptional means (*sādhana-viśeṣa*). One who supplements

54. BS, Part I, p. 36.

55. *Manu*, II, 28.

56. *Gautama-dharma-sūtra*, VIII, 22.

57. III, iv, 32.

58. BS, Part I, p. 36.

the meditative discipline, which by itself leads to Self-realization, by the prescribed yajñas and such other rites which are exceptional means, is able to reach the goal far more quickly than otherwise. In other words, even though both of them, *viz* the exclusive pursuit of contemplative discipline on the one hand, and the combined use of contemplative discipline and ritualistic discipline on the other, lead to the direct intuition of the non-dual Self, there is difference between them in respect of time that is taken to reach the goal. When the relational and indirect knowledge of the non-dual Self derived from the Upaniṣadic *śabda* is combined with repeated contemplation (*abhyāsa*), the goal *viz* the direct intuition of the Self (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*), is reached quickly; but when the relational and indirect knowledge of the non-dual Self is combined with repeated contemplation and scriptural rites, the goal is reached *very* quickly. So in accordance with the nature of the discipline that one adopts after getting the verbal cognition (*śabda-jñāna*) of the non-dual Self, one attains Self-realization quickly or very quickly, slowly or very slowly. In this connection Maṇḍana quotes the authority of Bādarāyaṇa who says, "And there is need of all works, on account of the scriptural statement of sacrifices and the like, as in the case of the horse."<sup>59</sup> Maṇḍana explains the *sūtra* and the illustrative expression "*aśvavat*" thus: since there is the scriptural statement, "Him the Brāhmaṇas seek to know by the study of the *Veda*, by sacrifices..."<sup>60</sup> the Vedic karmas are required for attaining Self-realization, even though it can be attained by means of contemplation (*abhyāsa*); though the goal may be reached by plodding on, without a horse, yet a horse is sought to be employed for gaining time or for avoiding inconvenience.<sup>61</sup>

59. *Vedānta-sūtra*, III, iv, 26.

60. *BU*, IV, iv, 22.

61. *BS*, Part I, pp. 36-37.



## 8

It is necessary to clear certain erroneous notions about liberation before we elucidate the standpoint of Advaita. It is sometimes argued that knowledge is the means to the attainment of release. Various *śruti* texts are cited in favour of this view. The *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad* says: "He attains life eternal through knowledge."<sup>62</sup> The *Chāndogya* declares: "He who has found out and who understands that Self obtains all worlds and all desires."<sup>63</sup> These scriptural texts, it is claimed, purport to show that knowledge is the means through which release is attained. Knowledge itself is not release. If that were the case, the *Upaniṣad* would not have said that *mokṣa* is attained through knowledge. In so far as it maintains that knowledge is the means through which release is attained, the two are different, and they are related as cause and effect.

This way of conceiving *mokṣa*, according to Maṇḍana, is not satisfactory. On this view, *mokṣa* would cease to be eternal, for it seeks to reduce *mokṣa* to the status of an effect (*sādhya*) brought into being by a cause. Anything that comes into being as an effect of a cause has a beginning; and whatever has a beginning has an end. If *mokṣa* were to be an effect like a pot, it would cease to be eternal; and if it is not eternal, it would be followed by the state of bondage. But *mokṣa* is an eternal condition characterized by the total absence of *saṃsāra*. Therefore, the view that *mokṣa* is an effect brought into being by knowledge militates against its eternality.<sup>64</sup>

It might be suggested that release could be looked upon as an effect like annihilative non-existence (*pradhvaṃsābhāva*). *Pradhvaṃsābhāva* has a beginning, but no

62. 11.

63. VIII, vii, 1.

64. *BS*, Part I, p. 78.

end. If release is treated as *pradhvaṃsābhāva*, it is undoubtedly an effect; nevertheless, it has no end. What this suggestion aims to show is that release is an effect without, however, ceasing to be eternal. This way of characterising release as an *abhāva* is wrong. *Mokṣa* is *bhāva-rūpa*; it is to be described positively as of the nature of incomparable and unsurpassable bliss. If any positive existent is an effect, it cannot be eternal; sooner or later it will be destroyed. It should be pointed out here that there is no contradiction between what we said about release earlier and what we are maintaining now. Release is a state in which there is the total absence of *saṃsāra*. This description is negative. Though release is positive, we have resorted to the negative characterization for the simple reason that *saṃsāra* disappears at the advent of *mokṣa*, and that its removal is total and final. It is characterized negatively only in the figurative sense. There is, therefore, no contradiction between what we said earlier and what we now maintain.

Let us now consider another interpretation which seeks to show that release can be treated as an effect brought into being by a cause without any danger to its eternality. *Avidyā* is the cause of bondage; and the destruction of the cause of bondage is release. Its destruction is caused by knowledge. *Mokṣa*, that is to say, is *pradhvaṃsābhāva*; though it is an effect, it is eternal like the destruction of a pot. This way of interpreting release is equally untenable. It is based upon the assumption that the destruction of *avidyā* which is the cause of bondage is different from *vidyā*, while it is not. Maṇḍana equates the removal of ignorance (*avidyā-nivṛtti*) with Brahman-realization (*vidyā* or *tattva-jñāna*). The rise of the right knowledge itself is the removal of *avidyā*. It is, therefore, not different from *vidyā*; only if it is different, it can be the effect of *vidyā*.<sup>65</sup>

65. *Ibid.*: "*avidyā hi bandhahetuḥ; tattvajñānodaya eva ca tannivṛttiḥ.*"

To remain in one's own state (*svarūpa-sthiti*) is *mokṣa*. The *Upaniṣad* brings out this idea when it says: "Having reached the highest light, he becomes merged in his own true form."<sup>66</sup> If release is an effect, *i.e.* something that is brought into being by a cause, its nature cannot be what the *Upaniṣad* makes it out to be. What is accomplished cannot be of the nature of the Self which is eternal. Release is attained when the knower of the truth remains what he has always really been, *viz* the eternal, self-luminous Brahman, remains, that is to say, in his own state. The view that release is an effect brought into being by a cause runs counter to the *Upaniṣadic* teaching.<sup>67</sup>

## 9

Release, according to others, is the attainment of Brahman by the individual soul. Just as a person would go by a particular path in order to reach his destination, so also the individual soul departing from the body, takes to a particular path in order to reach Brahman. The individual soul will get release only when it reaches Brahman. There are *śruti* texts which seem to lend support to this view. It is said in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: "A hundred and one are the arteries of the heart; one of them leads up to the crown of the head. Going upward through that, one becomes immortal; the others serve for going in various other directions."<sup>68</sup> The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says: "When he thus departs from this body, he goes upwards by these very rays... As his mind is failing, he goes to the sun. That verily is the gateway of the world..."<sup>69</sup> A text of the *Brhadāranyaka* says: "Those who know this as such and those too who meditate with faith in the forest on the truth, pass into the light, from

66. *CU*, VIII, xii, 2.

67. *BS*, Part I, p. 78.

68. *II*, iii, 16.

the light into the day, from the day into the half month of the waxing moon..."<sup>70</sup> These *śruti* texts, it is claimed, which describe the course after death make it clear how the individual soul, after departing from the body goes by a certain path, reaches Brahman, and attains immortality. Depending on the authority of these texts, it is argued that liberation consists in the attainment of Brahman by the individual soul proceeding along a particular path after death.

The explanation of release given above is untenable. It is intelligible to say that a person reaches his destination by proceeding along a particular path. His destination, say a certain village, is away from him. Limited as it is in space, the person must move towards it from his place, if he wants to reach it. But the same does not hold good in the present case. There is no need for the individual to go by a certain path to reach Brahman, for the latter is all-pervading; and if it is all-pervading transcending the limitation of space, it is always attained. Only if it is away from the individual by being restricted in space, the latter, it could be said, should reach it by taking a particular path. There are *śruti* texts which speak of Brahman as all-pervading. The *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad* says: "It (Brahman) is within all this."<sup>71</sup> The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* speaks of Brahman as "eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent."<sup>72</sup> For another reason also, this view is not satisfactory. The village which a person wants to reach is different from him. Only if he proceeds along a certain path, he can reach it. Whereas the person is different from the village which he wants to reach, the *jīva* is not different from Brahman which is to be attained.

69. VIII, vi, 5.

70. VI, ii, 15.

71. 5.

72. I, i, 6.

On the other hand, the *jīva*, in its true form, is Brahman itself. Only if it is taken to be non-different from Brahman, the *śruti* text which declares most emphatically that "when verily the Self is ... known, then all this is known"<sup>73</sup> will be significant. If the two are different, the knowledge of the one will not entail the knowledge of the other. The non-difference of the *jīva* and Brahman is brought out directly by the *Upaniṣad* when it says, "That thou art."<sup>74</sup>

When a person realizes the non-dual Self, he has no path to tread. The idea of going to a new abode through a particular path is denied of him. *Śruti* says: "Of him, the *prāṇas* do not depart. Being Brahman, he attains Brahman."<sup>75</sup> There is another scriptural text which says: "Prāṇas do not depart from (the body of) the knower of the truth; they are annihilated here itself."<sup>76</sup> *Śruti* texts dealing with the course of the departed soul belong to the sphere of *saguṇa-vidyā*. They purport to teach meditation on qualified Brahman. For the purpose of meditation, the texts teach Brahman as qualified by name, form, and so on. What is attained by meditation is not the supreme, unconditioned Brahman, but only the lower, conditioned Brahman of *brahma-loka*. Unlike those who go to *candra-loka* by the path of darkness, those who go to *brahma-loka* are on the pathway to perfection, because they are vouchsafed gradual liberation (*krama-mukti*). When they are in *brahma-loka*, they attain the knowledge of the supreme Brahman; getting themselves liberated, they do not come back again to this world.<sup>77</sup>

73. BU, IV, v, 6.

74. CU, VI, viii, 7.

75. BU, IV, iv, 6.

76. *Nṛsiṃhottaratāpanyupaniṣad*, 5.

77. BS, Part I, pp. 122-123.

## 10

According to another view, release consists in the individual soul losing its identity and merging itself in Brahman. This point will be clear, if we consider certain examples. The rivers which flow into the sea lose their identity and separate individuality by becoming one with it. They merge in the sea and become the sea itself. Bees prepare honey collecting the juice of different flowers and reducing them into one essence. The juices of different flowers lose their essence. The different juices are not seen with their distinguishing marks in the one essence which is a blend of different juices. In the same way, the *jīva* merges in Brahman and loses its identity. According to this view, when it merges in Brahman in such a way that it cannot be discriminated from Brahman, it attains release. The authority of *śruti* texts is invoked in support of this view. Uddālaka Aruṇi instructs his son, Śvetaketu, in the following way. He says: "Just as, my dear, the bees prepare honey by collecting the juices of different trees and reducing them into one essence; and as these possess no discrimination (so that they might say) 'I am the essence of this tree,' 'I am the essence of that tree,' even so, indeed, my dear, all these creatures though they reach Being do not know that they have reached it." "These rivers, my dear, flow the eastern towards the east, the western towards the west...They become the sea itself. Just as these rivers which do not know 'I am this one,' 'I am that one,' in the same manner whatever they are in the world that they become."<sup>78</sup>

Even this view of release cannot stand examination. It proceeds on the wrong assumption that the *jīva* and Brahman are different, while they are not. We can talk about the rivers which flow into the sea becoming one

78. CU, VI, x, 1-2.

with it, when they merge in it, or the different juices losing their identity in the one essence to which they are reduced, since the two—the rivers and the sea, or the different juices and honey—are different. But Brahman is not different from the *jīva*, but is identical with it. If they are different, we can talk about the latter merging in the former and losing its identity. Since they are non-different, the very idea of the one merging in the other is meaningless. There is also another reason to show why this view is untenable. It is possible to say that two things possessing form and parts get mixed with each other, losing their individual distinguishing marks. The Self or Brahman has no form and parts. The *Upaniṣad* declares that the Self is “without parts, without activity.”<sup>79</sup> The very conception, then, of the *jīva* becoming one with Brahman by losing its form and parts is meaningless.

When *śruti* texts give the examples of the rivers and the sea, and of the juices and the honey, the point of analogy is not in respect of non-separation. As entities, the rivers and the sea as well as the juices and the honey can become non-separate through union (*saṁsarga*). But this is not possible in the case of the *jīva* and Brahman, for they are not entities which can become non-separate through union. The point of analogy is not in respect of the state of non-separation, but only in respect of the absence of the knowledge of difference (*viveka-jñānābhāva-parā*). Just as the rivers or the juices possess no discrimination to the effect, “I am this one,” “I am that one,” even so there is no discrimination between the *jīva* and Brahman.<sup>80</sup>

## 11

Some others think of release in a different way. The individual soul comes forth from Brahman; for *śruti*

79. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI, 19.

80. *BS*, Part I, p. 124.

declares that "as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Self come forth...all beings."<sup>81</sup> The *jīva*, that is to say, is the effect of Brahman. It attains release when it acquires the condition of its cause, *viz* Brahman, from which it has come forth. In support of this view, a text from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* is cited: "Being a knower, shaking off good and evil, and free from stain, he attains supreme equality with the Lord."<sup>82</sup> Release is, therefore, the attainment of the condition of Brahman, which is the cause, by the *jīva* which is its effect. This view also does not stand to reason. The effect is always of the nature of its material cause. If so, the *jīva* is always of the nature of Brahman from which it has come forth. Since the *jīva* is always of the nature of Brahman, it is meaningless to say that it must attain the condition of its cause. Only if it is different from Brahman, can we say that it acquires the nature of Brahman which is its material cause and thereby attains release. In so far as it is not different from it, the nature of Brahman is always attained.

## 12

According to another view, the *jīva* should undergo transformation and become Brahman to attain release. Just as a person transforms himself into a tiger by means of the yogic powers which he has developed, so also the *jīva* changes itself into the form of Brahman. *Śruti* itself speaks of such a transformation of the *jīva* into Brahman. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says: "He verily who knows the supreme Brahman becomes Brahman himself."<sup>83</sup> The transformation of the *jīva* into Brahman is, therefore,

81. BU, II, i, 20.

82. III, i, 3.

83. III, ii, 9.



release. This view also like the earlier ones cannot bear examination. The term "transformation" signifies that one thing becomes another. When a thing undergoes transformation, it changes into something quite different from the one it was previously. A person who is an adept in yogic practices transforms himself into the form of a tiger; he assumes a new form which is different from the one which he had previously. Transformation indicates that the thing which undergoes change and the object into which it is changed are different. Since the *jīva* is not different from Brahman, it is wrong to speak of the transformation of the *jīva* into Brahman. Further, whatever object undergoes transformation will acquire new characteristics which serve to distinguish it from its previous condition. Brahman is of the nature of consciousness and as such is not different from the *jīva* whose real nature is also consciousness. The *jīva* which is supposed to change into Brahman does not differ from it at all.

It may be argued that there is a vital difference between the *jīva* and Brahman. Even though the *jīva* like Brahman is of the nature of consciousness, it differs from the latter in one important respect. It is subject to grief and delusion, while Brahman transcends all these. When the *jīva* changes into Brahman, there is the absence of grief and delusion in that condition. Thus the condition of the *jīva* is different from that of Brahman, and we can without any inconsistency, so it may be argued, talk about the transformation of the one into the other. This argument is untenable. The critics should be asked whether the *jīva* by its very nature is afflicted by grief and delusion or not. If the answer is in the affirmative, the *jīva* can never get rid of them. If they constitute its nature, they can never be destroyed, and the *jīva* will always be subject to them. If, on the other hand, they are treated as characteristics foreign to its nature, they cannot

stick to it as permanent possessions; they will disappear of their own accord, and no special effort need be taken to remove them.<sup>84</sup>

## 13

So far we examined several views of *mokṣa*, and all of them are erroneous. According to Advaita, the realization of the true nature of the Self is release. The Self or Brahman which is non-dual is of the nature of knowledge, bliss, and existence. It is ever-free; it is of the nature of eternal release. But its real nature is missed due to *avidyā*. The *jīva* is Brahman itself. It is on account of the limiting adjuncts that it appears to be different from it. Birth and death, finitude and limitation, do not belong to it, for it is of the nature of Brahman which is unborn and homogeneous, infinite and immutable; but they pertain to the psycho-physical complexes, which cause finitude and limitation and which are, therefore, not-Self and non-real. Attachment to the non-real is responsible for desire, sorrow, and suffering. And the root cause of all these is *avidyā* which obscures the real nature of the *jīva*. The obscuration is removed through knowledge. When the veil which covers the truth falls off at the onset of knowledge, the *jīva* shines in its own true form as real, knowledge, and infinite, in the same way as a crystal (*sphaṭika*) shines in its own true form when the *jabā* flower which is responsible for the red colour which it has assumed is removed from its vicinity. The crystal by itself is not red; but it appears to be red when it is kept against the *jabā* flower which is red. What its true nature is cannot be known so long as it is kept against the red background provided by the flower. The flower not only conceals the real nature of the crystal, but also makes it appear red. No sooner is it

removed from the vicinity of the crystal the red colour of the crystal disappears, and the crystal shines in its own true form. When the flower is removed, the crystal remains what it has always really been; it has not attained a new form. When *avidyā* which has been obscuring the true nature of the *jīva* disappears at the onset of *vidyā*, the *jīva* shines in its resplendent glory and supernal excellence; the knower of the truth remains what he has always really been—the eternal, free, self-luminous Brahman.

*Brahmaprāpti* or the attainment of Brahman is said to be release. Since the *jīva* is of the nature of the eternal, free, self-luminous Brahman, what is required for *brahmabrāpti* is just the knowledge of the truth. The *jīva* should realize its true nature by destroying the false belief in the psycho-physical complexes which serve to limit and particularize it. When the false belief which is *avidyā* is destroyed, release is said to be attained by the knower of the truth. For release, what is needed is the knowledge of the truth and nothing else.

If release signifies the realization of one's real nature, how can it be said to be originated or brought into being? We can throw light on this question by considering an example. The dirt which has settled upon the cloth does not allow it to appear in its white colour. When it is removed, the cloth shines in its original colour, and we say, "The cloth has *become* white." Here there is no origination of a new colour. The cloth was white even earlier. But still we say that it has become white as if it was not white previously. In the same way, the knower of the truth gives up the notion of the identity of the Self with the body, etc., and becomes Brahman himself. A text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says: "Being Brahman, he attains Brahman."<sup>85</sup>

If release is not interpreted as realizing one's real nature, *i.e.*, realizing what one has always been, the expression "being Brahman" (*brahmaivasan*) would be void of meaning.

The attainment of the right knowledge itself is release. It is wrong to look upon release as something different from knowledge. Ignorance is bondage; and when it is removed, the chains of bondage are broken. So Maṇḍana says that the removal of ignorance (*avidyā-stamaya*) is release. But the removal of ignorance is not different from *vidyā*; it is the rise of right knowledge itself that is spoken of as the removal of ignorance. Maṇḍana elucidates this point by examining the nature of *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is either non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) or mis-apprehension (*viparyaya-grahaṇa*). If it is understood as non-apprehension, it is *abhāva*; *i.e.* it signifies the absence of knowledge. It is only at the onset of knowledge which is positive (*bhāva*) that the non-existence of *avidyā* will cease to be. The rise of *vidyā* signals the setting of *avidyā*; and the latter is not different from the former. If *avidyā* is understood as mis-apprehension, it is positive in form, for it is not mere absence of knowledge, but erroneous cognition. And its removal consists in the rise of the right knowledge which, being opposed to it, sublates it. For example, the erroneous cognition of shell as silver disappears when there arises the valid cognition. The removal of the erroneous cognition is *not brought about* by the valid cognition of the object as shell. The latter is not the cause of the former, though they take place simultaneously; *i.e.* the rise of valid cognition coincides with the disappearance of erroneous cognition. Hence the two cannot be related as cause and effect. The rise of the valid cognition of the object as a piece of shell is spoken of as the removal of erroneous cognition, and the one is not different from the other. In whatever way *avidyā* is understood,

its removal, Maṇḍana says, should be equated with knowledge. In other words, the attainment of the right knowledge itself is release.<sup>86</sup> There are many *śruti* texts in support of this view. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says: "He verily, who knows the supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman himself."<sup>87</sup> A text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says, "He who knows the bliss of Brahman fears not."<sup>88</sup> The *Īśa Upaniṣad* declares, "What delusion, what sorrow is there for one who sees the unity of existence?"<sup>89</sup> The point to be noted here is that there is no temporal difference between knowing Brahman and the cessation of fear, or between seeing the oneness and the disappearance of delusion and sorrow. *Śruti* does not say that *after* knowing Brahman the knower of the truth becomes Brahman, or *after* knowing the bliss of Brahman the wise man is not subject to fear, or *after* the perception of the unity of existence delusion and sorrow cease to exist. On the contrary, it speaks of them as taking place simultaneously. In so far as the *Upaniṣad* speaks of the attainment of knowledge and release as taking place simultaneously and not in succession, the attainment of the right knowledge itself is release.<sup>90</sup>

Only things which are different can be said to take place simultaneously. If so, how can it be said, it may be argued, that the attainment of right knowledge itself is release and also that they take place simultaneously? Maṇḍana says that this objection is without force. Even though the two are identical, they are spoken of as if they are different; and the difference that arises is incidental

86. *BS*, Part I, pp. 121-122.

87. III, ii, 9.

88. II, iv, 1.

89. 7.

90. *BS*, Part I, p. 122.

to our expression, and does not really exist. Consider the following case. When a pot is destroyed, pot-sherds come into existence. The destruction of the pot is not different from the origination of pot-sherds. Nevertheless we speak as if they are different; and the difference arises because of our expression. If we treat it as *abhāva*, we refer to it as destruction of pot. If, on the other hand, we view it positively, we refer to it as the origination of pot-sherds. In the same way, we employ positive and negative expressions when we speak of release. It is a state where one fears not (*na bibhēti*). Or, it can be described as a state where one remains as the knower of the truth (*vidvān*). In that state there is no delusion, no sorrow (*ko mohah, kaḥ śoka*). It is a state where one realizes the oneness (*ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*). It is in this way that *śruti* refers to release by positive and negative expressions. Thus the attainment of right knowledge is release. Or, we can say that the setting of ignorance (*avidyāstamaya*) is release.<sup>91</sup>

## 14

It may be asked whether Brahman-realization or the attainment of right knowledge marks the removal of ignorance alone leaving intact the accumulated *karmas* of the past, the fructified as well as the unfructified, or whether it marks the removal of ignorance along with the accumulated *karma* of the past that has not yet fructified, leaving however a special type of the past *karma* known as *prārabdha* which has begun to bear fruit, or whether it signalizes the destruction of all *karmas* without any exception whatsoever together with ignorance which is the root cause of bondage. The answer which Maṇḍana gives is as simple as it is straight. He observes that at the onset of knowledge *karmas* are destroyed in

91. *Ibid.*

*toto* together with the source from which they come into existence. The individual soul is apparently stained by agency and experience, merit and demerit, love and hate, and other imperfections when it is encircled by the evil of *avidyā*; and when ignorance disappears at the onset of knowledge, it does not go single but with the entire battalion of *karma*. its fruits and their enjoyment, of which it is the binding force and sustaining buttress.<sup>92</sup> It should not be thought that Brahman-intuition destroys karmas. There is no causal relation between the dawning of right knowledge and the destruction of karmas. At the onset of knowledge, ignorance disappears making it impossible for karmas to continue. Karmas depend on ignorance, and when ignorance which is their source disappears, it is but natural that karmas also vanish into thin air. In order to show that this view is based upon the scriptural authority, Maṇḍana quotes the well-known *Muṇḍaka* text: "The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his karmas terminate, when He is seen—the higher and the lower."<sup>93</sup> This passage is significant for two reasons: it not only refers to the cessation of karmas along with the erroneous cognition and doubts at the time of Brahman-realization, but also uses the term "karmas" (*karmāṇi*) in the plural and not in the dual number so that it would include karmas of all type, *prārabdha* or that which has fructified, *sañcita* or that which has not yet begun to operate, and *āgāmi* or that which is yet to come.

It appears *prima facie* that Maṇḍana's standpoint comes into conflict with a passage in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, though the *Muṇḍaka* text quoted above appears to lend support to his point of view. The *Chāndogya* text says: "For him there is delay only so long as he is not

92. *BS*, Part I, verses 107-107½, p. 129.

93. *II*, ii, 8.

delivered (from the body), then he will become one with Brahman."<sup>94</sup> If all karmas, including *prārabdha* which accounts for the present embodied condition, are extinguished at the time of Brahman-realization, the body of the person who has attained the right knowledge should fall off resulting in the complete liberation from embodied existence as soon as knowledge has dawned on him. So if a person attains perfect intuition, he should become disembodied also. The *Chāndogya* text, however, says that one should wait for the falling off of the body in order to attain final release. In other words, the contradiction between the *Chāndogya* text which, by fixing the death of the body as the utmost limit for the attainment of final release (*kaivalya*), refers to the continuation of *prārabdha* even after the attainment of right knowledge and the *Muṇḍaka* text which avers in unequivocal terms that all karmas are extinguished at the onset of knowledge, calls for reconciliation.

The reconciliation, it may be said, can be effected in the following way. The *Muṇḍaka* text may be said to refer to the destruction of the accumulated *karma* of the past that has not yet fructified and the prevention of any future accumulation of *karma*, at the onset of knowledge. *Prārabdha-karma*, however, is not dissolved at the time of Brahman-realization, but continues its inevitable work till such time that the body falls off as indicated by the *Chāndogya* text. This reconciliation which in an equal measure does justice to, and preserves the claims of, the two authoritative scriptural texts meets with the approval of Bādarāyaṇa who says: "But only those former (works) whose effects have not yet begun (are destroyed by knowledge); because (Scripture states) that (*i.e.* the death of the body) to be the limit."<sup>95</sup> In continuation

94. VI, xiv, 2.

95. *Vedānta-sūtra*, IV, i, 15.



of this, he says in a subsequent *sūtra*: "But having destroyed by fruition the two others, he becomes one with Brahman."<sup>96</sup>

To Maṇḍana the alleged contradiction is only apparent and not real. His standpoint, based as it is upon the authority of the *Muṇḍaka* text, does not come into conflict with the *Chāndogya* text quoted above, if the significance of the latter is set forth properly. Interpreting the *Chāndogya* text in two ways, Maṇḍana shows with great exegetic skill that his standpoint is in perfect harmony with the scriptural passage in question. One interpretation results in the advocacy of *sadyomukti* or complete liberation from embodied existence immediately following Brahman-realization as a perfectly sound doctrine, while the other interpretation involves the acceptance of *jīvanmukti* or liberation-in-life as also logically tenable.

Maṇḍana contends that the *Chāndogya* text in question does not convey the delay in the attainment of final release for one who has realized Brahman; on the contrary, it conveys the idea of quickness (*kṣīpratā*) or the total absence of delay in attaining final release. We can make this point clear by means of an illustration. When a person is asked to get ready quickly and go to a certain place, he says: "This will be the only delay for me—that I bathe and eat and get ready." This sentence, it is obvious to us, does not convey the sense of delay in his getting himself ready; on the contrary, it conveys the idea of quickness or absence of delay in his getting himself ready. In the same way, the *Chāndogya* text should be construed as conveying quickness or absence of delay in attaining final release. If the intention of the text is to convey the sense of delay that is caused in the

96. *Ibid.*, IV, i, 19.

attainment of final release, it could have said simply "For him there is delay" without however referring to the falling off of the body as the limit for the attainment of final release. Emphasizing the expression "*tāvadeva*" which means "only so long as" contained in the text, Maṇḍana says that in so far as the text speaks about the limit (*avadhivīśeṣam*) by using the expression "*tāvadeva*", it should be interpreted as conveying the sense of quickness or absence of delay in attaining final release.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the *Chāndogya* text conveys the idea that a person attains final release as soon as he attains Brahman-realization. Just as the accumulated *karma* of the past which has not yet fructified is extinguished at the onset of knowledge, so also *prārabdha-karma* is dissolved at the time of Brahman-realization. And so the question of the continuance of *prārabdha* even after the attainment of Brahman-realization and its exhaustion by allowing it to spend itself out through enjoyment (*bhoga*), does not arise. Thus at the onset of knowledge all karmas, the fructified as well as the unfructified, disappear resulting immediately in the complete liberation from embodied existence. Maṇḍana's standpoint which is based upon the authority of the *Muṇḍaka* text does not, therefore, come into conflict with the *Chāndogya* text cited above.

It is necessary to clear a doubt at this stage before we proceed to the second interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text given by Maṇḍana. On the above mentioned interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text which supports *sadyomukti*, how is the description of the *sthitaprajña*, one of steady knowledge, contained in the second chapter of the *Gītā* to be justified? If complete liberation from embodied existence is simultaneous with Brahman-realization, there can be no one whom we can refer to as *sthitaprajña*. Questions like: "How does one of steady knowledge speak?"

97. *BS*, Part I, p. 130.

How does he sit? How does he move?"<sup>98</sup> which Arjuna asks, as well as the picturesque description which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives in answer to the questions are, it appears, meaningless and untenable, if a person attains complete liberation from embodied existence as soon as he attains the right knowledge. Maṇḍana observes that the *sthita-prajña* described in the second chapter of the *Gītā* may be taken as a seeker after truth, and not a sage who has attained the perfect intuition of the non-dual Brahman, one who is still in the pursuit of the real, and not a perfected being who has completely freed himself from the fetters of *avidyā*, a highly advanced *sādhaka* who has closely approximated to realization and is awaiting it, and not a *siddha* who has realized Brahman and has annihilated all his nescience. The description of such a person is both possible and intelligible.<sup>99</sup>

We shall now consider the second interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text. On the analogy of the performance of a rite whose result is reaped after a fairly long time, it may be thought that Brahman-realization would lead to the attainment of complete liberation from embodied existence after a pretty long period. According to Maṇḍana, the *Chāndogya* text does not lend support to any such fear. The *Chāndogya* text, says Maṇḍana, should be taken to convey the idea that, if there is delay in the attainment of final release for one who has realized Brahman, it is only till the falling off of the body. The text does not purport to show that there will be delay in the attainment of final release; on the contrary, it points out that the falling off of the body (*dehāpāta*) is the utmost limit with reference to the delay (*cirātva*) when it arises. In short, according to this interpretation, the *Chāndogya* text conveys the sense that the persistence of the body in certain cases even after Brahman-realization is only for

98. BG, II, 54.

99. BS, Part I, p. 130.

a short while, and that the body will fall off soon marking the attainment of final release. It is clear from this interpretation that Maṇḍana accepts *jīvanmukti* in those cases in which the body persists for a short while even after Brahman-realization. Maṇḍana would have no objection to say on this interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text, which lends support to the doctrine of *jīvanmukti*, that the *Gītā* description of a *sthitaprajña* may be taken to refer to a *jīvanmukta*.<sup>100</sup>

According to Maṇḍana, the doctrine of *sadyomukti* is as logically tenable as the doctrine of *jīvanmukti*. If he were of the view that the doctrine of *sadyomukti* is untenable, he would not have interpreted the *Chāndogya* text in such a way as to lend support to that doctrine. Commenting upon Maṇḍana's first interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text, Citsukha says that the explanation contained in the first interpretation is from the point of view of some of the Advaitins. Maṇḍana's own view, according to Citsukha, is contained in the second interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text.<sup>101</sup> It is, therefore, wrong to say that the doctrine of *jīvanmukti* does not commend itself to a logical mind like that of Maṇḍana.<sup>102</sup> It should be pointed out here that, like Maṇḍana, Sarvajñātmamuni also argues that the doctrine of *sadyomukti* is quite sound. According to one interpretation offered by him, liberation from embodied existence is true release, and *jīvanmukti* is figurative. In the other interpretation, Sarvajñātmān upholds *jīvanmukti* as a perfectly sound doctrine.<sup>103</sup>

100. *Ibid.*

101. See *Brahmasiddhivyākhye*, pp. 452-453.

102. See S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, *The Bhāmatī of Vācaspati*, Introduction, p. xliii.

103. See *Saṁkṣepaśārīraka*, IV, 38-39; IV, 40-46.

The doctrine of *jīvanmukti* which Maṇḍana accepts presents certain difficulties characteristically peculiar to the standpoint that he has chosen to adopt. How could the body which is due to *prārabdha-karma* persist at all even after the attainment of the right knowledge, when it is admitted that at the onset of knowledge *avidyā* and all karmas including *prārabdha* are dissolved? If *avidyā* and all karmas disappear *in toto* at the onset of knowledge, final release should synchronize with Brahman-realization. If so, the question of delay in the attainment of final release does not arise; nor is it consistent to say that the falling off of the body is the limit with reference to the delay, when the assumption of delay itself is unwarranted. In short, the co-existence of Brahman-realization and embodied existence seems to be a patent contradiction which calls for explanation.

A restatement of Maṇḍana's position will be helpful to us to follow the explanation which he gives with regard to the persistence of the body in certain cases even after realization. According to him, at the attainment of Brahman-realization all karmas including *prārabdha* along with *avidyā* disappear resulting in complete liberation from embodied existence. He totally rejects the view that *prārabdha-karma* will come to an end only when its inevitable workings are exhausted through enjoyment. Therefore, one who has attained Brahman-realization does not wait for the exhaustion of *prārabdha* through enjoyment to get final release. Though *prārabdha* ceases to exist like other karmas together with *avidyā* at the onset of knowledge resulting in complete liberation from embodied existence, it may be that in certain cases the body persists for a short while even after realization. The very fact that he supports the doctrine of *jīvanmukti* by interpreting the *Chāndogya* text as conveying the sense that, if there is delay in the attainment of final release, it is only till the falling off of the body, shows that he admits

a short while, and that the body will fall off soon marking the attainment of final release. It is clear from this interpretation that Maṇḍana accepts *jīvanmukti* in those cases in which the body persists for a short while even after Brahman-realization. Maṇḍana would have no objection to say on this interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text, which lends support to the doctrine of *jīvanmukti*, that the *Gītā* description of a *sthitaprajña* may be taken to refer to a *jīvanmukta*.<sup>100</sup>

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100. *Ibid.*

101. See *Brahmasiddhiyākhya*, pp. 452-453.

102. See S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, *The Bhāmatī of Vācaspati*, Introduction, p. xliii.

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A restatement of Maṇḍana's position will be helpful to us to follow the explanation which he gives with regard to the persistence of the body in certain cases even after realization. According to him, at the attainment of Brahman-realization all karmas including *prārabdha* along with *avidyā* disappear resulting in complete liberation from embodied existence. He totally rejects the view that *prārabdha-karma* will come to an end only when its inevitable workings are exhausted through enjoyment. Therefore, one who has attained Brahman-realization does not wait for the exhaustion of *prārabdha* through enjoyment to get final release. Though *prārabdha* ceases to exist like other karmas together with *avidyā* at the onset of knowledge resulting in complete liberation from embodied existence, it may be that in certain cases the body persists for a short while even after realization. The very fact that he supports the doctrine of *jīvanmukti* by interpreting the *Chāndogya* text as conveying the sense that, if there is delay in the attainment of final release, it is only till the falling off of the body, shows that he admits

the possibility of the persistence of the body for a short while in certain cases even after realization. Whether complete liberation from embodied existence is simultaneous with Brahman-realization or not, Brahman-realization marks the cessation of *prārabdha*.

How, then, does the body persist in certain cases even after realization? Maṇḍana says that it is because of saṃskāras or the impressions of the fruits of *prārabdha* which have been enjoyed (*bhujyamāna-vipāka-saṃskārāt*). We can elucidate this point by certain examples. The cognition of a rope as a snake causes fright which in its turn causes perspiration all over the body and makes the person tremble from head to foot and call aloud for help. When the fear caused by the erroneous cognition disappears at the time of the realization of the truth, the trepidation and the trembling and other consequences caused by fear cease to exist; but sometimes they continue for a short while as a result of the impressions or saṃskāras caused by fear, trepidation, and trembling which he experienced, even though the fear has disappeared. Let us consider another illustration. The potter's wheel continues to revolve for some more time in spite of the fact that the staff through which it was made to revolve by the potter has been removed from it.<sup>104</sup> In the same way, the body persists in certain cases even after realization as a result of the impressions caused by the fruits of *prārabdha* which have been enjoyed.<sup>105</sup>

The difference between the root cause (*mūla-kāraṇa*) and the impressions which it causes should be carefully noted. Though the impressions of fear account for the continuance of trembling and other consequences for a

104. See *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 67.

105. *BS*, Part I, p. 131.



short while even after the disappearance of fear, they cannot be as powerful as fear which is their cause, and so trembling and other consequences can continue only for a little while and not for a longer period. Nor can the impressions persist indefinitely. If they continue indefinitely, the trembling and other consequences will never come to an end. We do not seek a fresh cause for the removal of the impressions of fear. The right knowledge which causes the fear to disappear also effects the removal of the impressions of fear gradually. Just as the performance of a certain rite leads to a particular result which takes place at some future time by generating an unseen potency (*apūrva*), so also knowledge generates its *saṃskāra* through which it brings about the extinction of the impressions of fear gradually. Or, it can be said that the impressions of fear disappear gradually due to the work of time in the same way as the impurities from child birth (*sūta-koṣa*) are said to disappear gradually due to the work of time.<sup>106</sup>

The same argument holds good in the case of the continuance of embodied existence after Brahman-realization. Maṇḍana says that the *saṃskāras* which account for the continuance of the body even after the realization cannot prolong the embodied existence for a long time, as they are not as powerful as their cause, *viz prārabdha*. The right knowledge will cause them to disappear gradually through the *saṃskāras* which it generates; or, it can be said that they disappear gradually due to the work of time. It should be pointed out here that the argument sometimes put forward that the impressions of *prārabdha* which are said to persist after realization may continue even after the falling off of the body is utterly meaningless. If they could persist even after the falling off of the body, the objection that a person who has attained Brahman-

realization will never attain final release is legitimate. That the impressions of *prārabdha* could persist even after the falling off of the body is neither intelligible nor tenable. The falling off of the body is indicative of the disappearance of the impressions of *prārabdha* *in toto*. In the event of their continuance, liberation from embodied existence would not take place at all. The work of the impressions of *prārabdha* should take place in the present form of existence itself which is brought into being by *prārabdha*, and so the falling off of the body implies the total disappearance of the impressions of *prārabdha*. Nor is it possible to say that the *saṁskāras* of those karmas which disappeared without getting any chance to begin their work can continue after the falling off of the body. Therefore, a person who has attained the right knowledge is sure to attain the final release as soon as his present form of embodied existence comes to an end. All that Maṇḍana wants to urge is that the persistence of the body in certain cases even after realization should be ascribed to the continuance of the impressions of *prārabdha*, and not to *prārabdha* which ceases to exist along with other karmas and *avidyā* as soon as Brahman-realization is attained. It may be that the body persists as a result of the impressions of *prārabdha* (*prārabdha-karma-saṁskārāt*), or as a result of the impressions of the fruits of *prārabdha* which have been enjoyed (*bhujyamāna-vipāka-saṁskārāt*); or it may be that the body persists because of both—the impressions of *prārabdha* as well as the impressions of the fruits of *prārabdha* which have been enjoyed.<sup>107</sup> The continuance of trembling and other consequences in the case of a certain person who has mistaken a rope for a snake, even though the fear caused by the false knowledge has been removed by the right knowledge, could be ascribed to the impressions of fear (*bhaya-saṁskāra*), or the impressions left behind by the trembling and other consequences (*kāṁpādi-*

*saṁskāra*) of which he was the victim, or to both—the impressions of fear as well as the impressions of the trembling and other consequences which he experienced. Similarly, the persistence of the body even after realization could be ascribed to, and explained in terms of, *saṁskāras* in whatever way they are interpreted.<sup>108</sup> Maṇḍana refers to the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* to show that there is a parallel to his view in the Sāṅkhya system. Īśvara Kṛṣṇa says: “(The spirit) remains invested with the body because of the force of past impressions like the whirl of the (potter’s) wheel (which persists for a while by virtue of the momentum imparted by a prior impulse).”<sup>109</sup>

The person who has realized the truth but whose body persists due to *saṁskāras* appears for all outward purposes to be one who acts in terms of agency and enjoyership. Though the persistence of the body contributes to the semblance of enjoyment (*bhoga*), the knower of the truth is not subject to delusion and deep-rooted attachment to the objects of the world as one who has not realized the truth is. Such a person is referred to as a *sthita-prajña* in the *Gītā*. He is one who has completely cast off all desires connected with progeny, possessions, and the world, and is satisfied with the innermost Self in himself; he is one who is not distressed in calamities, and has no longing for pleasures.<sup>110</sup> Just as a grown-up man in his senses does not become attached to the objects made of clay and wood, even so a person who has realized the truth does not become attached to his body and the phenomenal world whose existence is nothing more than an appearance to him. His body and the phenomenal world have been really sloughed off through his realization,

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 67.

110. *BG*, II, 55-57.

though they have not yet completely perished, and they bear the same relation to him as a cast-off slough to a snake to which it once belonged. The lifeless slough of a snake is cast off by it as no more a part of itself and lies in the ant-hill or any other nest of a snake ;<sup>111</sup> similarly his body and the world of objects are discarded as not-Self by the liberated man, though he is in embodied existence.

The persistence of the body which is due to *saṁskāras* should not be treated as *avidyā* for the simple reason that it does not bind the *jīvanmukta* in any way. We have already stated that impressions are powerless when compared with their cause. In spite of the continuance of the body as a result of which the *jīvanmukta* appears outwardly to be one caught up in the world-show, he is really unaffected by the ruffle of the empirical life. Exceedingly attenuated and entirely powerless as they are, the impressions of *prārabdha* only contribute to the semblance of enjoyment; they cannot cause any physical experience of a binding character. Since the *jīvanmukta* is a person who possesses true knowledge, the world-show which he witnesses as a result of the body does not delude him and cannot bind him even as it appears to him. The released person can never be attached to the world whose illusory nature is well cognized, just as a person who knows that he is seeing only a figure of a beautiful damsel depicted in a canvas is not attached to it. The mirror may distort the figure reflected in it and make it appear as other than what it is. The image of a face reflected in it may appear to be dark, though the original face is not dark, or it may appear to be very fair bearing no resemblance to the original. Whatever may be the form and appearance of the image reflected in it, a person does not feel happy or miserable over that so

111. See *BU*, IV, iv, 7.

long as he knows what he is and also that he is seeing only the image of his face reflected in a mirror. In the same way, a *jīvanmukta* who has realized the non-dual Self does not lose his balanced deportment, for he knows the illusory character of the body and the physical environment. There is, therefore, all the difference between the life of a man who, without realizing the truth, is passionately attached to the phantom world which is undoubtedly real to him, and the life of a person who has realized the truth, but who continues in embodied existence due to *saṁskāras*. Witnessing the world show, a *jīvanmukta* maintains equanimity in pleasure and pain, which is an indication of the absence of attachment to the body and the physical environment. The *Gītā* brings out this idea very vividly. A *jīvanmukta* is one who is "without attachment anywhere, on meeting with anything good or bad, (who) neither exults nor hates."<sup>112</sup> To him the physical body and the phenomenal world are "night" (*niśā*), for they do not bind him; it amounts to his not being aware of them at all. "Where all beings are awake, that is the night of the sage who sees."<sup>113</sup> In short, *jīvanmukta* lives in the world, but he is not of it.

112. BG, II, 57.

113. *Ibid.*, II, 69.



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